

OUT WEST: RANCHERS AS ENVIRONMENTALISTS / TRAVEL: GENOA

The Atlantic Monthly

JULY 1999

A BOLD PROPOSAL TO FIX CITY SCHOOLS

A VOUCHER
PROGRAM
EVEN LIBERALS
CAN EMBRACE

THE FALSE PROMISE OF SLAVE REDEMPTION

A REPORT FROM
SUDAN

BY STEPHEN
BUDIANSKY

THE NEW
GENETICS OF
DOG BEHAVIOR

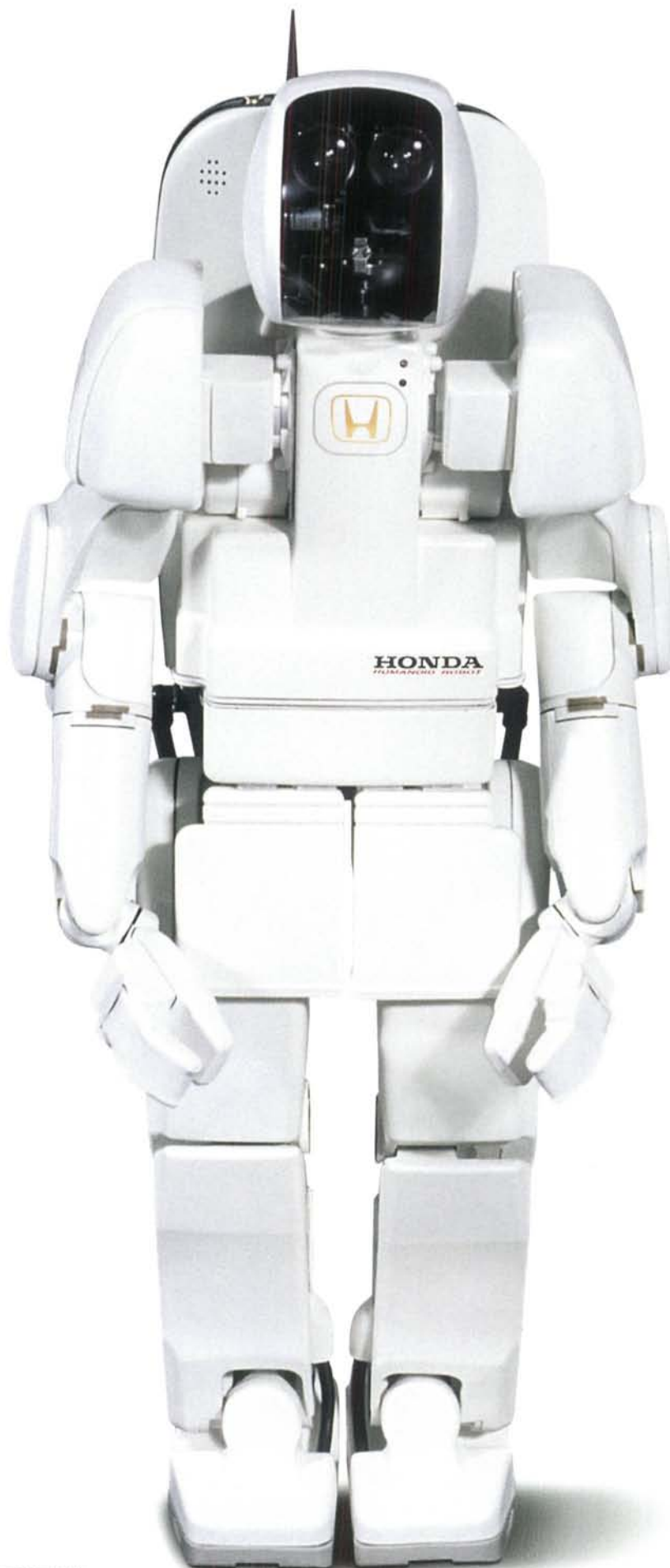
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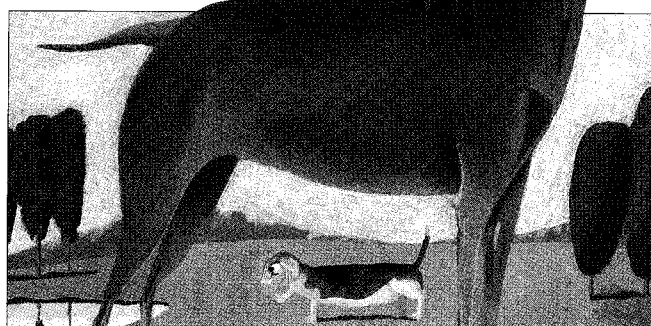
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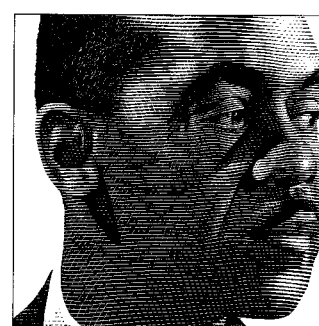
HONDA
Thinking.



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He has endured decades of personal turmoil, but as the

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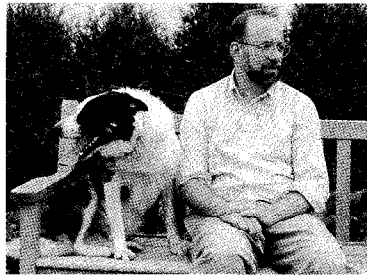
STEPHEN Budiansky, the author of this month's cover story, "The Truth About Dogs," has put the natural world at the center of both his personal and his professional life. He lives on a farm in northern Virginia, and the four books he has published all deal with the dynamics of the animal kingdom. His widely acclaimed *The Nature of Horses* (1997) offers a stylish and entertaining introduction to everything from equine evolution and equine intelligence to the breeding of thoroughbreds. His most recent book, *If a Lion Could Talk* (1998), investigates the difficult-to-apprehend precincts of animal consciousness. Budiansky's cover story in this issue surveys the often counterintuitive findings of the new science of dogs.

"Everyone asks if I grew up on a farm," Budiansky says when asked about his background. "The truth is exactly the opposite. I wasn't even allowed to have a pet frog. So I suppose if I had a 'formative experience' that made me so interested in animals, it's that I didn't have anything to do with them when I was young."

Budiansky's interest in science has been broad. His undergraduate degree (Yale, 1978) was in chemistry. He holds a master's degree (Harvard, 1979) in applied mathematics—training that is

itself being applied toward the writing of his next book, a history of cryptography in the Second World War. Budiansky has been the Washington editor of the journal *Nature*, and for more than a decade held various writing and editing positions at *U.S. News & World Report*, ultimately rising to deputy editor. He joined the staff of *The Atlantic Monthly* as a correspondent last year, and in recent issues has written about politically correct gardening (June, 1999) and computer programs that can translate (December, 1998).

Budiansky points out that domesticated animals have long been thought of as "degenerates" from a biological and behavioral point of view—and until recently elicited far less scientific scrutiny than more exotic species. "What makes domestic animals, and especially dogs, so interesting to me," he says, "is the way that their behaviors, which evolved over millions of years for a particular environment and social structure, are now overlaid upon human society and our largely man-made environment. We're always slightly misunderstanding each other. But at the same time we have enough in common that our interactions are highly revealing about both dog society and human society." —THE EDITORS



MARTHA POLKEY

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Stephen Budiansky ("The Truth About Dogs") is a correspondent for *The Atlantic*.

Peter Davison ("Italy's Greatest Seaport") is the poetry editor of *The Atlantic*. His tenth book of poetry, *No Escape*, will be published next year.

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Jane Hirshfield ("Apple") teaches in the Bennington College M.F.A. writing seminars. Her most recent books are *The Lives of the Heart* (1997), a collection of poetry, and *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry* (1997), a book of essays.

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His articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Reader's Digest*.

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LETTERS

Victory at Sea

Reading David M. Kennedy's well-researched article "Victory at Sea" (March Atlantic), I was pulled up short by his assertion that Magellan would have appreciated the "crossing the T" naval maneuver at the Battle of Surigao Strait. Magellan would not have even understood the context of the maneuver, much less appreciated it. His military experience was as a soldier, even though he was a very able navigator and sea captain. This was not unusual—in Magellan's time naval battles were fought either like land battles, with one ship grappling and boarding another, or by ramming, as with triremes and galleasses. He lived barely long enough to see the era in which major guns became the principal weapon for destroying enemy ships, ushered in by the British man-of-war *Great Harry* in 1514. Even then naval battles were a swarming melee, and geometry was not a factor in strategy until the British Admiralty issued its "Fighting Instructions" in 1653, creating the line-ahead formation of ships. The "crossing the T" maneuver became possible only with the advent of steam, and it was not actually realized until this century, in the Russo-Japanese Battle of Tsushima Strait (1905) and the First World War Battle of Jutland (1916).

Larrie D. Ferreiro

Fairfax, Va.

I was disappointed that some mentions of General Douglas MacArthur were less than laudatory. "Dugout Doug" is not a label to be slapped on a great general known for exposing himself to danger. To somehow make his stay in Corregidor a case of abandoning his troops is very unfair. Compounding that by describing his departure and flight to Australia as some sort of cowardly act is not in keeping with the facts. William Manchester tells that the Australians threatened to remove their troops from Europe if MacArthur was left to be captured or killed in the Philippines. In that case they wanted their troops in

Australia, to defend against a future Japanese invasion. MacArthur had asked that his wife and child be brought out, but he would stay with his men. Roosevelt ordered him to leave. Events proved that it was the proper decision.

Many military people enjoyed sniping at MacArthur because of his theatrics and ego, but he was nevertheless an exceptional leader. I served as a gunner in the 7th Amphibious Force, Seventh Fleet, in actions up the New Guinea north coast and in Dutch New Guinea, Biak, Halmahera, and the Philippines on October 24, 1944, as the Battle of Leyte Gulf began. For three days we fought off kamikaze attacks as the enemy tried to retake the beachhead. We were often referred to as "MacArthur's Navy," because in the island-hopping strategy our actions were synchronized with those of the army on land.

Most veterans of the 7th Amphibious would, I believe, have my bias in regard to General MacArthur. His management of our part of the war in the Pacific kept a lot of men alive.

Charles Isaacs

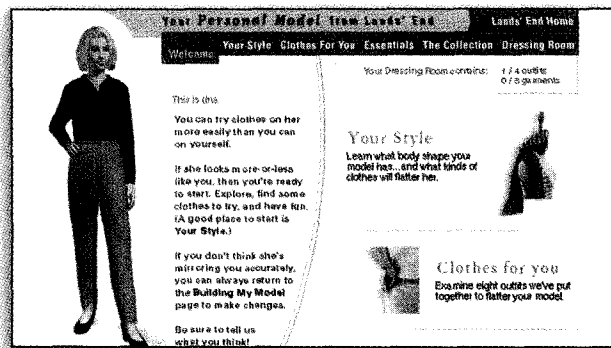
Los Angeles, Calif.

David Kennedy says that German U-boats were "not true submarines at all but submersible torpedo boats that could dive for brief periods before, during, and after an attack." He implies that German U-boats were unique in that they could not "remain submerged for long." All submarines of this pre-nuclear time had to surface periodically to recharge their batteries and restore oxygen reserves. Germany's U-boats were not only true submarines but the most advanced submarines of their day. Many of their features, as well as design innovations that the German navy had planned before the end of the war (such as the now ubiquitous "teardrop" hull), were incorporated by both Soviet and Western alliance navies after the war.

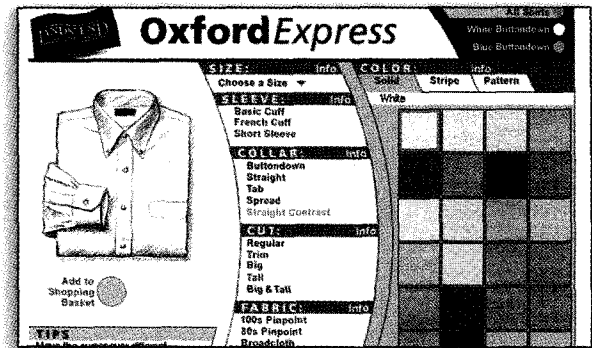
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David Kennedy asserts that aircraft carriers were "long advocated by visionaries such as the American Billy Mitchell. . . ." In fact William A. Mitchell, of the Army Air Service, was a determined foe of naval aviation. Among his many mistaken pronouncements was "Airplane carriers are useless weapons against first-class powers."

Kennedy's implications notwithstanding, the U.S. Navy led the world in many key aspects of naval aviation (for example, the first flight from [1910] and landing aboard [1911] a warship; the first catapult launch of an aircraft [1916]; the task-force formation built around the aircraft carrier [early 1930s]). Kennedy might more accurately have given credit to such "visionaries" as Admirals John H. Towers, William A. Moffett, and Ernest J. King.

Malcolm Muir Jr.

*Austin Peay State University
Clarksville, Tenn.*

Admiral Ernest J. King was undoubtedly wrong to let merchantmen sail individually along the East Coast, but he would have been right had he insisted on the same pattern for crossings of the North Atlantic. The huge Allied losses to German U-boats would have been immeasurably reduced if the convoy concept had never been put into use. I'm still puzzled that Allied naval authorities never asked themselves why the German wolf packs lay in wait exactly where the convoys were sailing.

The answer: the Triton cipher, the German naval code, when it was finally broken, revealed that German U-boat captains were fully informed by Admiral Dönitz about where and when the convoys would sail. This very important point is curiously missing from Kennedy's otherwise informative article. From early 1943 faster merchant ships were allowed to cross the Atlantic individually—and also the very slowest ones, such as the Norwegian freighter *Henrik Ibsen*, 3,000 tons and built in 1903, which actually sailed all alone between UK and U.S. ports for six war years without ever encountering either a U-boat or the Luftwaffe. (Norway, having put its 1,000 merchant ships at the disposal of the Allies, lost more than 500 of them—a costly and by no means insignificant contribution to the war effort.)

Anders von Tangen Buraas
Montreux, Switzerland

A reader of David Kennedy's "Victory at Sea" could come away with the impression that our military leaders of that era were weak of character, blundering, cruel, and incredibly lucky—and even with the conclusion that we did not deserve the ultimate victory. Most of us who worked and served in those years want today's youth to know what willingness and patriotism we felt on December 8, 1941.

Had Dönitz gained complete control of the Atlantic, and had Yamamoto set up his Eastern Pacific Headquarters in Hawaii, the ultimate victory would still have been ours, although at a later date. The average American of those days had a spirit difficult to find today, when America-bashing is considered "correct."

John O. Healey

Lahaina, Hawaii

I was surprised and a little dismayed that in the otherwise excellent account by David Kennedy the air-sea Battle of Okinawa was barely mentioned. The U.S. Navy sustained its worst losses of the war, in terms of ships sunk or disabled and in casualties, in that battle. True, the grand pendulum of the Pacific war may have swung in our favor by the start of that campaign, but that didn't stop the Japanese from sending wave after wave of kamikazes, in relentless and suicidal attacks on our fleet. I know, because I was there.

Ward Bushee

Aptos, Calif.

David M. Kennedy replies:

Once again, I thank the correspondents who have added clarifying detail to my account of the naval battles of the Second World War. Readers of *Freedom From Fear*, the book from which my article in *The Atlantic Monthly* was drawn, will find in it a more-extensive discussion than the article permitted of several matters raised here, including MacArthur's generalship, American innovations in naval air power, the Triton cipher, and the Battle of Okinawa.

Stakeholder Society

As he begins to discuss Bruce Ackerman and Anne Alstott's new book, *The Stakeholder Society* ("Against Inequality," April *Atlantic*), Jack Beatty asks readers to

put on their social-engineering hats. This is our first clue that we are about to be taken for a wild ride.

Ackerman and Alstott have identified a widening gulf between the haves and the have-nots in American society today. Their solution is to give \$80,000 to every citizen as he turns twenty-one. This would give everyone the opportunity, for example, to pay for a college education, considered the great equalizer. What a preposterous and exciting idea! Give young people a "stake" early in life, when it can do them the most good!

D. LaBarbera
Luling, Texas

Jack Beatty mentions "the increasing income, wealth, and opportunity gap . . . between the rich and the rest of us," but he fails to mention the reason for this: U.S. tax policies.

The production worker earning \$10 an hour in a manufacturing plant pays 7.65 percent in Social Security and Medicare taxes. A chief executive officer with \$200,000 in taxable income pays only 3.57 percent (\$4,240.80 in Social Security tax and \$2,900 in Medicare tax).

For an investment of \$50,000 in a low-income-housing tax shelter, the CEO can receive \$70,000 in *tax credits* over a period of ten years. The CEO can invest his accumulated wealth in tax-free municipal bonds—about \$60,000 tax-free on \$1 million each year. In addition, 401(K) programs can shelter about \$25,000 a year in income, with a slightly larger contribution from the company. Capital gains are taxed at 10 percent or 20 percent, and stock options are often added in.

As long as our tax policy favors the wealthy, the gap between them and the rest of us will continue to widen.

Warren Himmelberger
Littleton, Mass.

Small-Town Cop

New work from Tracy Kidder ("Small-Town Cop," April *Atlantic*) is as welcome as the springtime in New England. No writer sees more clearly, respects his subjects more, or writes about them better, than he does. No wonder they so clearly trust him; no wonder his readers do too.

George V. Higgins
Milton, Mass.

Precisely what is the diameter of the .12-gauge shotgun barrel? Based on the sizes of 20-gauge through 10-gauge shotguns, I'd say that no small-town cop has a cruiser big enough to hold one.

Rob Ellis
Golden, Colo.

Tracy Kidder replies:

Rob Ellis is right. Tommy O'Connor's shotgun was a 12-gauge, not a .12-gauge.

Virus Wars

Re Robert Buder's article "The Virus Wars" (April *Atlantic*): urban legends aside, it is impossible—repeat, impossible—to acquire a virus simply by opening an E-mail!

Surely Buder realizes this, and I'm certain his interviewees do too. The article, however, includes several vague statements that without clarification will simply fuel the panic. (I can't begin to count how many E-mails I've received in the past few years warning of a killer virus traveling by E-mail—warn all your friends! Usually the "news" is attributed to a Microsoft employee who's just trying to help save the world.)

Buder's opening refers to an "electronic message" that boggled computers at an IBM research center. Don't blame the messenger! The E-mail itself is incapable of executing any programs, virus or otherwise. Of course, if one downloads an attachment to an E-mail, that's another story (which should make folks think twice about forwarding and reforwarding those smutty Viagra cartoons).

Later Buder suggests that an executive could spread an infection throughout a company's computer system by sending an "electronic memo" to all employees. This is very misleading. "Electronic memo" suggests to most readers that the executive sent a simple E-mail. But, as I've explained, that would not spread a virus. If the executive composed the memo in a word-processing program that was infected and then attached the document to an E-mail that was sent to all employees, the virus would spread to each employee who downloaded and read the attachment.

Aren't there enough millennium wackos and neo-Luddites out there already? Does *The Atlantic* need to feed the frenzy of fear with easily corrected ambiguities?

Christopher D. Cuttone
Portland, Ore.

Robert Buder replies:

It is true that you can't get a virus simply from reading text-only E-mail—and nowhere does the article state that you can. However, viruses are commonly spread by means of E-mail—often through Word and Excel attachments, as my article points out.

In the cited instances, care was taken to avoid the term "E-mail." The phrase "electronic message" was used interchangeably with "rogue program"—clearly not simple E-mail. The use of "electronic memo" followed a discussion of how macro viruses spread in word-processing and spreadsheet files.

What's more, since the latest E-mail systems make it extremely easy to open attachments, there is often little distinction between reading E-mail and potentially unleashing a virus. IBM reports that in a few cases attachments can be opened as the user simply "opens the mail."

If the Shoe Fits

I have seldom seen the case better made (and never as amusingly) for the importance of math in modern life than in the article by Cullen Murphy in April's *Atlantic Monthly* ("If the Shoe Fits"). Thanks!

Silvio Levy
Mathematical Sciences
Research Institute
Berkeley, Calif.

I do not question Cullen Murphy's claim that modern technology can tailor-make our clothes to our individual bodies. I do question whether cost-effective industry has not been heading for some time in the opposite direction. Underneath my one-weight-for-all-seasons suit the sleeves of my 15½, 32/33 dress shirt don't show their bagging, but the sleeves of my medium sports shirts must be shortened. Forty years ago many sports shirts came with sized sleeves.

My L/XL hat wears a groove in my 7¾ head that eventually makes it fit, but my old 9½ D feet must choose either a tight modern D/medium or wallow in EE/wide. Fifty years ago I sold shoes at Gimbel's with a choice of every size available from AAA to EEE. At that time I bought 11½ socks, too, which are now usually offered in a single size, 10–13.

William J. Hyde
La Crosse, Wis.

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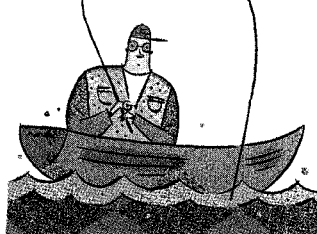
Health & Safety

So-called adult day-care centers, which provide nonresidential health care, meals, therapeutic services, and activities for elderly people (and others) who are functionally or cognitively impaired, will come under scrutiny this month, as an accreditation program begins. Although about 4,000 such centers exist, until now there has been no nationwide accreditation system. Surveys will be administered by the Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission. Facilities must demonstrate, among other things, that they employ qualified personnel and provide adequate space and individualized treatment plans. Some 200,000 adults currently attend day-care centers. The centers free up their clients' usual caregivers to work or attend school, and allow impaired senior citizens to postpone moving to a nursing home.



Demographics

Animal shelters usually receive more calls about missing dogs in the aftermath of July 4 fireworks than at any other time of year. The noise sends many dogs running from home (cats, too, may be frightened, but they tend not to stray far). The American Humane Society urges that pets be kept indoors during fireworks and that they carry identification—not only tags but also microchips implanted subcutaneously in the scruff between the shoulder blades. The chips contain codes that can be read by scanners, which are used increasingly in animal shelters, veterinary clinics, and police departments, and can be checked against pet-owner databases. One kind of microchip has helped to return more than 17,000 dogs and cats to their homes since 1995.



Environment

July 19: The recreational salmon-fishing season begins today along the coast of Washington State. This year fishermen will have to adhere to a new regulation, one of several rules (many others are already in place in the Northwest) intended to help protect nine distinct populations of salmon that were recently listed as either threatened or endangered under the 1973 Endangered Species Act. In parts of Puget Sound, fishermen may not use weights of more than two ounces, so that hooks will not sink far enough to attract chinook, a deep-running fish. Residents of Seattle and Portland may also have to make accommodations in salmon's behalf: ideas under consideration range from restricting building permits, pesticide use, and water use to raising taxes in order to buy and protect land near waterways and spawning areas. In terms of both geographical scope and impact on human beings, this is one of the broadest applications of the act ever.

Food

July 3-4: Americans will eat more hot dogs—150 million—this weekend than during any other weekend of the year. For some this fare may not be a wise choice: since last December a record amount of hot dogs and other processed meats, 35 million pounds, has been recalled because of contamination by *Listeria monocytogenes*, and at least 20 people have died. In most people the bacterium causes only flu-like symp-

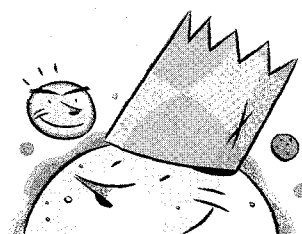


toms; however, in pregnant women, newborns, people with weakened immune systems, and the elderly it can cause blood infections, meningitis, and encephalitis, and the mortality rate among infected people in these groups exceeds 25 percent. It is unclear whether the spate of recalls is due to a rising incidence of contamination or merely reflects improved surveillance procedures. Increases in the amount of time products are permitted to remain on shelves may also be a factor: unlike many other bacteria, *Listeria* grows at refrigerator and freezer temperatures. Experts recommend reheating hot dogs and cold cuts until they are steaming.



Arts & Letters

Opera buffs who were let down last summer by the cancellation of *The Peony Pavilion*—a 400-year-old Chinese work that was to be performed as part of the Lincoln Center Festival until Chinese officials decided it was pornographic and feudal, and revoked the performers' visas—will now have a chance to see a slightly modified version, which opens at the festival on July 7. The opera, which centers on a teenage ghost and her dream lover, will include Chinese performers (China has relented). Although it is considered a major Chinese opera, *The Peony Pavilion* is rarely performed in full, because it is 20 hours long. The festival performances will take place in installments over three or four days. Last summer's fiasco was the latest in a long series of problems that have plagued the work: it was censored in the seventeenth century for political reasons, and has been blamed for the deaths of a number of women who are said to have pined away out of sympathy for the heroine.



The Skies

July 10: The waning Moon lies very near the reddish star Aldebaran in the predawn hours. **15:** The crescent Moon, Venus, and Regulus, the "king star" in the constellation Leo, make a tight triangle in the twilight this evening, low in the western sky. **17:** Venus reaches its greatest brilliance of the year tonight. **28:** Full Moon, also known this month as the Thunder or Hay Moon.

75 Years Ago

Marghanita Laski, writing in the July, 1924, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "It is in the bold misuse of our contemporary vocabulary that the art of the fashion writer is seen at its best; . . . I append an all too short glossary. . . .

AMUSING: cheap. . . .

CLASSIC: English garment (shoes, hat, suit) barely susceptible to fashion changes. . . .

DIGNIFIED: (i) of women: old; (ii) of clothes: for old women.

DRAMATIC: virtually unwearable, but photographs well. . . .

EVERYWHERE: in a very few places; e.g., *sable stoles* are e. . . .

FRANKLY: would be ugly if we didn't tell you it wasn't; e.g., *a f. jagged hemline*. . . .

HUSKY: suitable for outdoor country wear. . . .

LIMITED-INCOME: cheap. . . .

OLDER: (of women) old. . . .

THAT, THOSE: adjectives of distaste and elimination; e.g., *eliminate t. unsightly bulge*, or . . . *tweak out t. recalcitrant hairs*."



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Apollo 11, Apartheid, and TV

*When the only way to watch was to line up in front
of a purple velvet curtain*

ON July 20 thirty years ago my family—like millions of other South African families—was huddled around a crackling radio, listening to the moonwalk. Nobody in the entire country could watch it on TV. Television was verboten—a criminal technology under apartheid. Not until 1976 did South Africa's first TV sets flicker into life.

I remember Neil Armstrong's epic stroll as the event that marked the beginning of the end for the apartheid government's conviction that South Africa could remain a fortress against television into the next millennium. By that time even the Americans, the government argued, would have recoiled from TV's innate degeneracy and returned to the more civilized pleasures of radio. Albert Hertzog, South Africa's Minister of Posts and Telegraphs from 1958 to 1968, warned the parliament that "inside the pill of TV there is the bitter poison which will ultimately mean the downfall of civilizations." Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd likened television to poison gas and the atom bomb. The little box was a threat "to the racial struggle on a global scale," he declared. "TV would cause absolute chaos to South African life."

But faced with the prospect of missing the moonwalk, even conservative white South Africans began to grumble. It was insulting, one senator declared, to be "bracketed with the most backward peoples of the world such as the Eskimos who have not got television." Travel operators capitalized on this discontent of the privileged, flying sold-out package tours to London: twelve hours there and twelve hours back for the illicit high of sitting in the Dorchester Hotel and watching the moon landing on TV.

As a teenager I saw television just once, when, some months

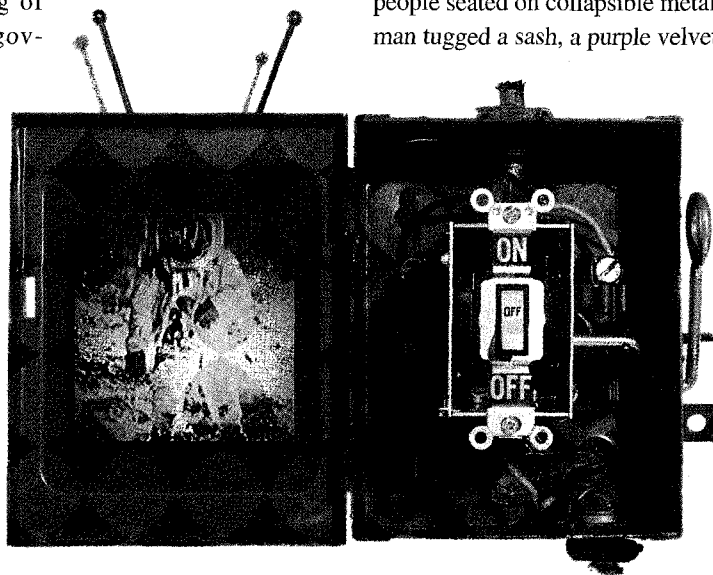
after NASA's triumph, the government sought to quell local discontent by arranging limited viewings of the taped landing. We had to line up at a planetarium: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for whites; Tuesdays and Thursdays for blacks. The turnout was immense. Policemen with German shepherds and Dobermans straining at the leash patrolled the line. After hours of waiting I entered a barricaded enclosure and joined twenty other people seated on collapsible metal chairs. A sullen moustached man tugged a sash, a purple velvet curtain slid back, and a television was revealed. For fifteen minutes I witnessed

a lunar landing that seemed no stranger than the unearthly presence of that black box in the room. Then the curtain was closed again and we filed out, abandoning our seats to the next twenty people in line.

By the time I acquired my B.A., in African languages, I had spent no more than that solitary peepshow moment with a television. The year I graduated, apartheid's apparatchiks cautiously introduced a single, state-controlled channel.

The ban earned Afrikaners some American admirers. Writing in the *National Review* in 1966, James Burnham, the author of *Suicide of the West*, argued that TV had proved catastrophic for American race relations. "What is 'the civil rights movement,' what *could* it be, apart from the media?" he wrote. Burnham concluded with envy and approval that "the absence of a 'native' liberation movement in South Africa is equivalent, very nearly, to the enforced absence of TV in South Africa."

The ban coincided with an ambitious scheme of forced removals, based on a kind of ethnic fundamentalism. Under this scheme black South Africans were divided into ten inviolable



by Rob Nixon

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ethnic "nations" and compelled to live segregated from one another in ten dusty, overcrowded reservations. Apartheid's visionaries hoped (and failed) to persuade the world that these patches of land were legitimate incipient independent ethnic states. The "bantustan" scheme, in the dismissive parlance of its opponents, was a form of mandatory multiculturalism that allowed apartheid's defenders to pretend that South Africa had a white majority.

In this context official hostility to television made perfect sense. The state recognized that TV's market-driven voracity would show scant respect for the jigsaw of militarily enforced ethnic boundaries. Hertzog condemned TV on these grounds: "There is no more powerful medium for dismantling the population groups' sense of identity." As one of his parliamentary colleagues put it, rather more emphatically, "Television, like communism, promotes sameness."

But after the *Apollo* landing whites campaigned in growing numbers to have the moratorium overturned. TV's absence, they protested, made South Africa look primitive. Black South Africans showed less interest in the debate: TV wasn't high on their list of deprivations. When the government finally capitulated, it did so in response not just to internal dissatisfaction but also to a new threat from abroad. NASA-led advances in satellite technology meant that foreign transmissions could now reach any South African with a concealed satellite dish and TV set. This possibility roused apocalyptic fears. One parliamentarian exclaimed, "Satellite broadcasts will be a mighty force in the hands of the Russians and Americans." Better to blanket the country with pro-apartheid TV as a pre-emptive strike.

For a few years the government sought to protect its multicultural-homeland dream by insisting that advertisers shoot their commercials for multiple audiences, using ethnically "authentic" actors in their ethnically "appropriate" homelands. This meant that a company wanting to sell, say, Castle Beer, had to employ ten different actors in ten different languages and travel to ten different bantustans in order to shoot a simple ad featuring one man drinking from a bottle. A corporate uproar put an end to the policy.

When I set foot in America for the first time, in 1980, at the age of twenty-five, I had amassed perhaps sixty hours of TV

viewing in my lifetime. Three days after my arrival I stood before a class of Iowa freshmen; I would be teaching them rhetoric for the year. They knew zero about South Africa. ("You're white and you're from Africa. How does that work?") I had no conception of the America I would meet—in particular, no idea how decisive TV was for the way my students read themselves, the past, the world.

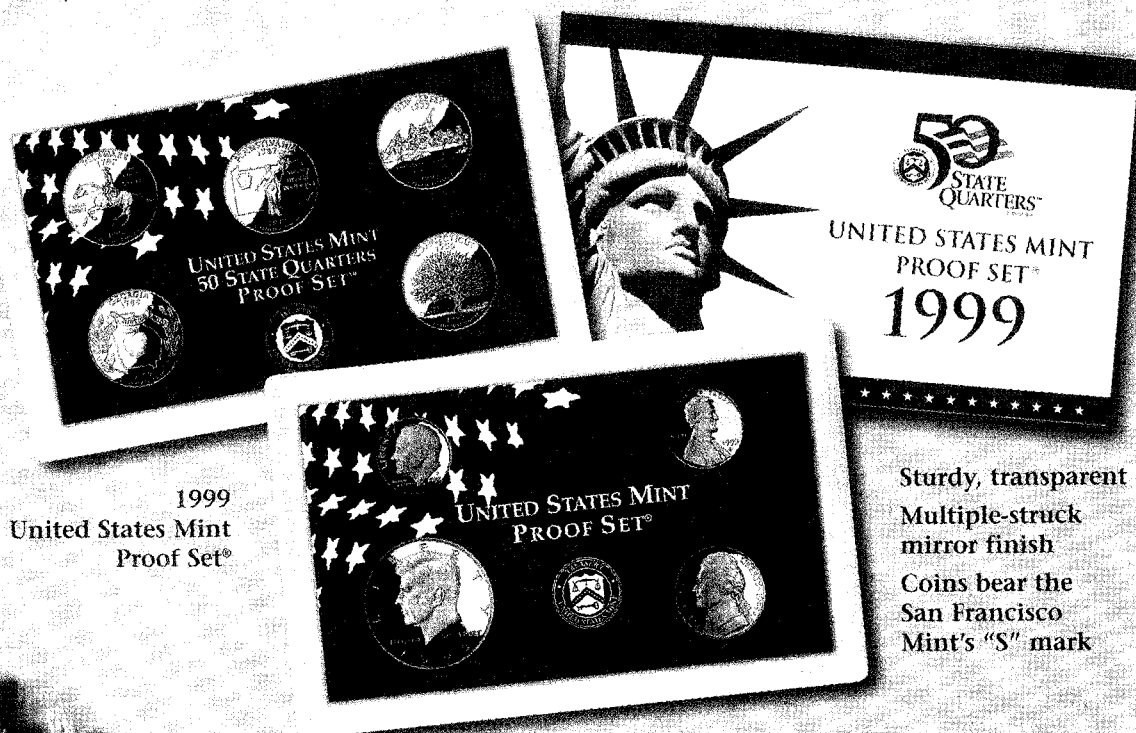
To redress my backwardness I organized the rhetoric course, a mixture of speechmaking and writing skills, around a challenge. The students had to pretend that an alien from Saturn or South Africa had landed in Iowa—someone who, like me, had never seen a game show or a soap opera. Their task was to explain the genres, history, meaning, and pleasures of television. The students enjoyed themselves—or so they told me at the party we threw nine months later, in a blue barn in a cornfield. Talking about images and TV story lines came easily to them. I found I could use that fluency to help energize their writing, which lagged behind their oral skills. I was delighted to receive in exchange a brisk, lively education from these native informants. My head quickly filled with the details of *Star Trek*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Saturday Night Live*, *Sesame Street*. I tackled these exotica with the application I had once reserved for studying algebra and Zulu.

I began to make other discoveries as well. Some were revelations, like the fact that Americans think of "multiculturalism" as a liberal term, not a catchphrase beloved by neo-fascist segregationists. No less startling was my discovery that in America the left, not the right, assailed TV as an emissary of cultural imperialism.

I have now lived in America for almost twenty years. I find that I seldom watch TV. I seem to lack the requisite forms of concentration—the media muscle memory—for a technology I acquired too late. Television fails to envelop me the way radio, books, and newspapers do; it's not something I can easily disappear into. But I look forward to the anniversary showings this month of Neil Armstrong's loopy underwater strides across the moon and across the tube. This time I'll be watching not in some poky booth patrolled by slaving dogs and armed guards but with a couch-sprawled nation for company. Still, I'm certain to feel some flickerings of my first sight of a TV set, and with it a frisson of illegality. ☼

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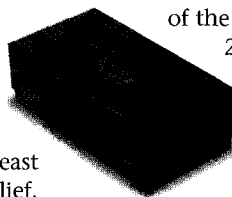
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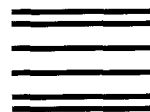


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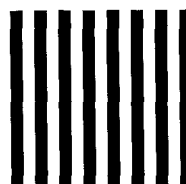
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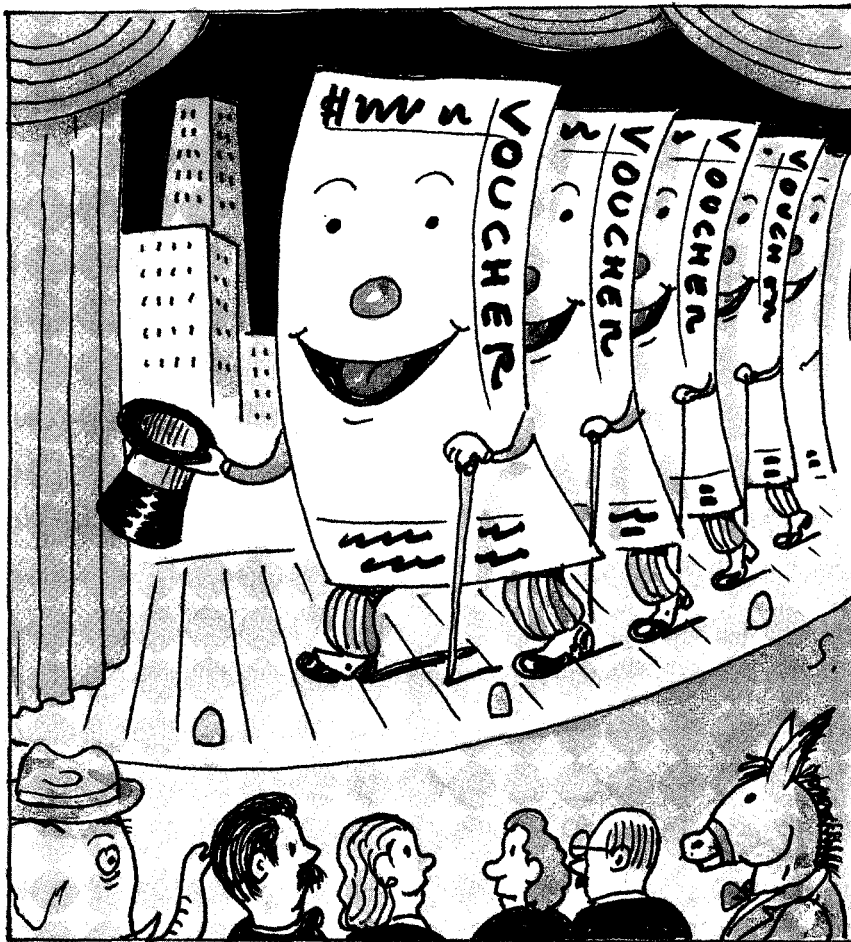
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A Bold Experiment to Fix City Schools

A proposal for school vouchers on which Milton Friedman, Lamar Alexander, and Kweisi Mfume, the president of the NAACP, all agree

WHEN Maria Neri's daughter Tina finished eighth grade, two years ago, her scholarship at a Catholic elementary school in south-central Los Angeles ended.

by Matthew Miller

The parochial high school in which Neri (not her real name) hoped to enroll Tina charges \$3,500 a year—a third less than

the \$5,400 Los Angeles would spend to educate Tina in public school. Neri, thirty-three, earns \$600 a month as a part-time teacher's aide; she's looking for a second, and perhaps a third, job. Her husband, from whom she is separated, earns \$1,200 a month as a laborer in a glass factory. He pays his

wife's monthly rent of \$340, but offers no support beyond that. After paying for food, a phone, gas, and other expenses, Neri had no money left to put toward private school for Tina. Yet she was afraid to send Tina to the neighborhood public school, where the walls were covered with graffiti, and "cholos," or gang members, had been involved in shootings that brought police helicopters to the campus. So Neri used her sister's address to enroll Tina at another public school, which, though twenty minutes away, at least seemed safer. But it is far from ideal. Classrooms each have forty to forty-five children belonging to several different grades. Tina, sixteen, says the teachers often have the students watch movies. Her math teacher was so confused about who Tina was that he gave her an F for not completing many assignments—a grade he changed, with embarrassment and an apology, after Neri confronted him with Tina's completed workbook. "I can see the difference," Neri says. "She's going down." Tina says she would go back to Catholic school if they could afford it. "I talk to my daughter," Neri explains, "and say, 'I'm sorry.'"

Neri's desire to send Tina to a better school is at the heart of one of the nation's most important and most demagogic debates. Through vouchers, often touted as an answer to Neri's problem, the government would give parents some or all of the money it now spends educating their children to use at a school of their choice. Depending on whom you listen to, vouchers are either a lifeline or a death knell. "It is quite simply an issue of survival for our nation's poorest students," says Dan Coats, a Republican and a former senator from Indiana. But Kweisi Mfume, the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, calls vouchers a "terrible threat," and Sandra Feldman, the president of the American Federation of Teachers, says they mean "a radical abandonment of public schools and public education."

These are heated claims, especially given the relatively small number of students who are involved in voucher programs today. Just over 52 million students attend grades K through 12 in the

United States. Only two cities offer publicly funded vouchers: in Milwaukee (whose breakthrough program was begun in 1990) roughly 6,000 of 107,000 students get vouchers; in Cleveland about 4,000 of 77,000 do. In May, Florida approved a plan under which students at the poorest-performing schools would get vouchers. Four schools are expected to be eligible this year, and 12,000 of the state's 2.3 million K-12 kids are expected to use vouchers over the next four years. Privately funded voucher programs in thirty-one cities served roughly 12,000 children last year; ten new such programs came into being for the 1998-1999 school year. Two wealthy investors, Ted Forstmann and John Walton, recently announced a plan to fund (along with other donors) \$170 million in vouchers, which will reach 40,000 new students over the next four years.

Add these numbers up and you get 74,000 children—about 0.1 percent of students. Add 200,000 for those students in the 1,200 charter schools around the country (which also give parents a choice), and the proportion comes to only 0.5 percent of schoolchildren. In other words, the school-choice debate is

Where is the “voucher left”? Vouchers have a long but unappreciated pedigree among progressive reformers.



taking place utterly at the margins. At this rate, for all the fuss, it's hard to imagine that any impact could be made on the skills and life chances of students stuck in our worst public schools in time to prevent what the Reverend Floyd Flake, a voucher advocate and a former Democratic congressman from New York, calls “educational genocide.”

This tragedy is most pronounced in big cities, whose public schools together

serve six million children. Despite heroic local efforts and pockets of success, depressing evidence mounts of an achievement gap between students in cities and those in suburbs, where, school-watchers say, most schools are doing fine, largely because they're safer, better funded, and less prone to the social ills that plague cities. Of Detroit's eleventh-graders 8.5 percent were deemed “proficient” in science on Michigan's 1997 statewide exam. Fourth-graders in Hartford were a tenth as likely as Connecticut students overall to show proficiency on the state's three achievement tests in 1996. Only two percent of Cleveland's minority tenth-graders have taken algebra. “The numbers tell a sad and alarming story,” a special report in *Education Week* concluded last January. “Most 4th graders who live in U.S. cities can't read and understand a simple children's book, and most 8th graders can't use arithmetic to solve a practical problem.” As polls prove, increasing numbers of urban parents like Maria Neri want a way out. It seems immoral to argue that they must wait for the day when urban public schools are somehow “fixed.” It's even harder to argue that bigger voucher programs could make things worse.

Yet a political standoff has kept vouchers unavailable to nearly 99 percent of urban schoolchildren. Bill Clinton and most leading Democrats oppose them, saying we should fix existing public schools, not drain money from the system. Teachers' unions, the staunchest foes of vouchers, are among the party's biggest donors, and sent more delegates to the 1996 Democratic National Convention than did the state of California. Republicans endorse vouchers as a market-based way to shake up calcified bureaucracies, but they generally push plans that affect only a few students. The distrust that has led to today's gridlock is profound. Republicans view Democrats as union pawns defending a failed status quo; Democrats think Republicans want to use urban woes as justification for scrapping public education and the taxes that fund it.

MISSING entirely from the debate is the progressive pro-voucher perspective. To listen to the unions and the NAACP, one would think that vouchers were the evil brainchild of the economist Milton Friedman and his conservative devotees, lately joined by a handful of

desperate but misguided urban blacks. In fact vouchers have a long but unappreciated intellectual pedigree among reformers who have sought to help poor children and to equalize funding in rich and poor districts. This “voucher left” has always had less cash and political power than its conservative counterpart or its union foes. It has been ignored by the press and trounced in internecine wars. But if urban children are to have any hope, the voucher left's best days must lie ahead.

Finding a productive compromise means recalling the role of progressives in the history of the voucher movement and exposing the political charades that poison debate. It means finding a way for unorthodox new leaders to build a coalition—of liberals for whom the moral urgency of helping city children trumps ancient union ties, and of conservatives who reject a laissez-faire approach to life's unfairness. The goal of such a coalition should be a “grand bargain” for urban schools: a major multi-year test of vouchers that touches not 5,000 but 500,000 children, and eventually five million—and *increases* school spending in the process. The conventional wisdom says that today's whittled-down pilot programs are all that is politically achievable. The paradox is that only through bigger thinking about how vouchers might help can a durable coalition emerge.

IN 1962 John E. “Jack” Coons, an idealistic thirty-two-year-old law professor at Northwestern University, was asked by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission to study whether Chicago schools were complying with desegregation orders. Coons soon found that what really interested him was a different question: Why were suburban schools so much better than those downtown? Over the next few years Coons, eventually joined by two law students, Stephen Sugarman and William Clune, found one answer in what would become a source of enduring outrage: America's property-tax-based system of public-school finance created dramatic disparities in the resources available to educate children.

This financial aspect of education's vaunted tradition of “local control” is rarely the subject of national controversy. In part that is because it gives the nation's most powerful citizens both lower taxes *and* better schools. Imagine two towns, Slumville and Suburbia. Slumville has

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In the 1960s affluent districts routinely spent twice what nearby poorer ones did, and sometimes four or five times as much. To Coons and his colleagues, such inequity in a public service was indefensible. Beginning with *Private Wealth and Public Education*, a book that he, Sugarman, and Clune published in 1970, Coons has denounced the system eloquently. It's worth sampling his arguments, because the left's case for choice is usually drowned out by the right's cheerleading for markets, or by urban blacks' cry for help. In a 1992 essay, "School Choice as Simple Justice," Coons wrote,

This socialism for the rich we blithely call "public," though no other public service entails such financial exclusivity. Whether the library, the swimming pool, the highway or the hospital—if it is "public," it is accessible. But admission to the government school comes only with the price of the house. If the school is in Beverly Hills or Scarsdale, the poor need not apply.

Coons's point was simple: the quality of public education should not depend on local wealth—unless it is the wealth of a state as a whole. "Everyone ought to be put in a roughly equivalent position with regard to what the state will do," Coons, now an emeritus law professor at Berkeley, says.

Coons and Sugarman made a successful case for the unconstitutionality of the school-finance system in California's famous *Serrano* case in 1971, beginning a national movement to litigate for school equity. Although it was little noticed then, they cited vouchers as a potential remedy. The idea was to give courts a way to instruct legislatures to fix things without having to mess with local control. Asking legislatures to centralize school funding at the state level was a political nonstarter. But through various formulas, Coons and Sugarman argued, the state could give families in poorer districts enough cash in the form of vouchers to bring education spending in those districts up to that of better-off districts. And what could be

more "local," they reasoned, than giving families direct control over the cash to use at schools as they chose?

COONS and Sugarman, focusing on school equity, thus arrived at a policy that Milton Friedman had been urging through a principled commitment to liberty and to its embodiment, the market. Friedman's 1955 essay "The Role of Government in Education" is viewed as the fountainhead of the voucher movement. In an ideal world, the future Nobel laureate reasoned, the government might have no role in schooling at all; yet a minimum required level of education and its financing by the state could be justified.

A stable and democratic society is impossible without widespread acceptance of some common set of values and without a minimum degree of literacy and knowledge on the part of most citizens . . . the gain from the education of a child accrues not only to the child or to his parents but to other members of the society. . . . Yet it is not feasible to identify the particular individuals (or families) benefitted or the money value of the benefit and so to charge for the services rendered.

However, Friedman said, if this "neighborhood effect" meant that the government was warranted in paying for K–12 education, another question remained: Should the government run the schools as well? Friedman's view was that schools could be just as "public" if the government financed but didn't administer them. That notion remains virtually unintelligible to leaders in public education, perhaps because it is so threatening.

Friedman's analogy (adopted by every voucher proponent since) was to the G.I. Bill, which gave veterans a maximum sum per year to spend at the institution of their choice, provided that it met certain minimum standards. Likewise, for elementary and secondary schooling Friedman envisioned a universal voucher scheme that would give parents a fixed sum per child, redeemable at an "approved" school of their choice. Such a school might be nonprofit or for profit, religious or secular. Parents could add to the sum if they wished. The role of government would be limited to assuring that "approved" schools included some common content in their programs, "much as it now inspects restaurants to assure that

they maintain minimum sanitary standards." In Friedman's view, market-style competition for students would spur the development of schools that were better tailored to families' needs and cost less than those run by notoriously inefficient public bureaucracies.

Friedman's and Coons's different angles of vision represent the ancient tug between liberty and equality within the pro-voucher camp—a debate the two have waged since Friedman was an occasional guest on Coons's Chicago radio show, *Problems of the City*, in the 1960s. Friedman today isn't bothered by issues of school-finance equity. "What's your view of inequity in clothing and food?" he snapped when asked recently, saying that such concerns reflect Coons's "socialistic approach." And even if public schools were making every child an Einstein, Friedman says, he would still want vouchers. "Private enterprise as opposed to collectivism," he says, "would always be better."

Coons is less ideological. In his view, choice would improve the public schools, which he believes would always be chosen by the majority, even with a full-blown voucher system. The prospect of losing students (and thus funding) would force improvements faster than today's seemingly endless rounds of ineffectual education fads. If poor children got a decent education under the current system, he adds, he probably wouldn't have devoted his life to these issues.

The fate of disadvantaged children under a voucher regime is where the Coons-Friedman clash is sharpest. Coons would be glad to offer vouchers to all low-income students and to no one else if such a step were necessary for consensus. He fears that under a universal voucher system they could get left behind, as schools competed to recruit better-off, smarter, healthier (nondisabled) students. The incentives are plain: such children would be easier to teach, and schools could charge wealthy families far more than the voucher amount to maximize profit. Coons and the voucher left therefore insist that any universal scheme should include protections for low-income and disabled children. Examples would be increasing the voucher amount for those children to make them more attractive to schools, and letting schools redeem their vouchers only if, say, 15

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

BY AUSTIN BAER

IN PRAISE OF ECSTASY

Onstage, the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra and the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra—two of the world's foremost ensembles of tomorrow's finest instrumentalists—are joining forces under the baton of Seiji Ozawa. On board, too, are Yo-Yo Ma and Yuri Bashmet, two of the most charismatic soloists of our time. The first half of the concert brings Béla Bartók's ballet score *The Miraculous Mandarin*, a fiery brew of still-shocking sex and violence. Then comes Richard Strauss's rollicking tone poem *Don Quixote*, with Ma's cello in the part of the impossible dreamer, and Bashmet's viola as his down-to-earth squire. The accent on youth, on excellence, on music as a language that transcends national boundaries, encompassing the spectrum of human experience—



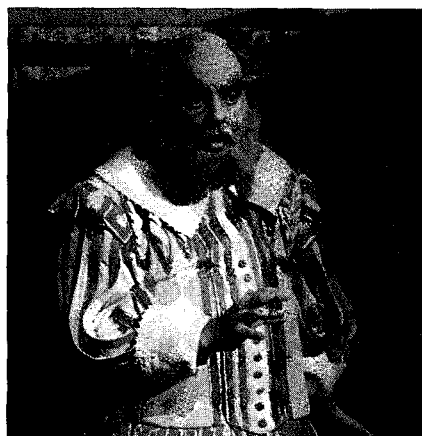
Summer music at Tanglewood

these factors make the program the perfect Leonard Bernstein Memorial Concert. The date is August 1, the time 2:30 P.M., the place Tanglewood, in the rolling Berkshires of western Massachusetts. Bernstein's lifelong association with this prototype of the American summer music festival makes the tribute even more fitting. Whether as composer or as conductor, Bernstein was among the chosen ones for whom art never became either commercial or routine, yet he never withdrew to an ivory tower. He made music for the multitudes. The Shed at Tanglewood seats thousands, the lawn several times more. Lenny never failed to bring the picnickers out in force. With cooperation from the weather, his memory should do the same. (For tickets call 888-266-1200.)

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York.

BORN ABOUT THREE OF THE CLOCK

"It must be enjoyed," Bryn Terfel said of Verdi's *Falstaff* even before he had learned the title role. At thirty-three, Terfel may seem a shade juvenile to portray Shakespeare's fat old scoundrel, but then, when riding high, few characters anywhere exhibit such superabundant youthful spirit as does Sir John. "I was born about three of the clock in the afternoon, with a white head and something of a round belly," he discloses in *Henry IV*, one of the opera's sources, twitting a fellow senior while shrugging off his years. When in a pickle, as he sometimes is, he strikes a gloomier note, but never without the same instinct



Bryn Terfel in the title role of *Falstaff*

for swagger. Although the story line of Verdi's miraculous farewell to the stage mainly follows *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which is no masterpiece, stolen passages

from the histories in which Falstaff first appeared add substance. The result is a portrait of Shakespearean roundness, scarcely paralleled in opera. Terfel, who inhabits his characters with unmatched relish, has just the burly sound and verbal zest this one requires. Lyric Opera of Chicago, which presents Terfel's first American

Falstaff as its season opener, seems to be forgetting just one thing: this act will be tough to follow. (September 25–October 29; 312-332-2244.)

WHERE WEBER CASTS HIS SPELL

To opera fans, for what now seems like forever, summer on Puget Sound has meant one thing: Wagner. Under an earlier administration of the Seattle Opera, old-school Wagnerians from the corners of the globe flocked to a reactionary *Ring des Nibelungen*, all four nights of it, staged in Classic Comics style with spears and winged helmets. Speight Jenkins, the critic turned impresario who has brought the company to new heights, made waves with a *Ring* for the nineties that has now, after several revolutions, rolled into history; an all-new one cranks up next year. In *Ring*-free seasons Jenkins has mounted *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* and *Tristan und Isolde*, in each case creating a festival aura around a single opera. This summer he attempts to do the same with Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz* (1821), a chancy proposition. The opera that set the whole history of German romantic opera on course (and thus cru-

cial to the development of Wagner), it tells a gripping story. But unlike Wagner, whose mythmaking lends itself to endless adaptation and to alternative ideologies, Weber in his plot mechanics is apt to strike post-Freudian audiences outside Germany as dated and naive. Trying to

translate the title literally is a losing battle. Seattle renders it as *The Devil's Bullet*, which gets right to the point. At the climax a young hunter fires his rifle and his bride falls—unharmful, Providence be praised. The implications of the action are by no means risible, and the score is ravishing (principal tunes are familiar from the famous overture, a concert-hall fixture). As he so often does,



Deborah Voigt

Jenkins has fielded important voices, foremost this time the soprano Deborah Voigt. But will the new Seattle staging by Dieter Kaegi—no friend of cobwebs or fustian—open American eyes to Weber's enduring vision? (August 5–21; 800-426-1619.)

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DANCE AND THEATER

BY NANCY DALVA AND JOHN ISTEEL

MERCE TURNS 80

Merce Cunningham is unaffected and direct and modest, and he dislikes any kind of fuss, particularly about his birthday. He is a forward-looking person who is always surprising. In fact, Cunningham has been surprising for so many years—more than fifty—that his perpetual insistence on change and chance is in itself somehow reassuring. With so many of his collaborators and peers in the art world now gone, he is in what is probably to him the unenviable position of being the senior standard-bearer for all of modernism. This means more, perhaps, in dance than in any other art form, because dance is by its nature reliant on the constant surveillance of its maker to be truly authentic. Cunningham has long since freed dance of all its conventional moorings and mores—he makes his work without music, without decor or costume, and without narrative. All but the last are added at the first performance. More or less singlehandedly, he has kept his evanescent art in pace with



Merce Cunningham

the other arts of the twentieth century. Now he is busy whisking it into the twenty-first, by means of the computer. (He is already a master of video and film techniques.) Among the works that the Lincoln Center Festival '99 is presenting this month, during The Merce Cunningham Dance Company's performances at The New York State Theater (July 21, 23–5; Ticketmaster, 212-307-4100), is *BIPED*, a multimedia collaboration. Also scheduled are a new piece for Mikhail Baryshnikov; the first New York performances of *Pond Way* (decor by Roy Lichtenstein, music by Brian Eno); appearances by The New York City Ballet in a revival of *Summerspace* (scintillating pointillist decor by Robert Rauschenberg, music by Morton Feldman); and the marvelous dances called *Rune*, *Sounddance*, *Ground Level Overlay*, and *Windows*. The Lincoln Center Festival '99 thus presents the dance event of the turn of the century—the Cunningham Celebration. Happy Birthday, Merce! —N.D.

MUSIC IN THE EYRE

A few devotees of Victorian literature may become neurasthenic at the news that *Jane Eyre* has been made into a Broadway-sized musical. Its U.S. premiere is at La Jolla Playhouse, July 6–August 22. Some might fear a postmodern, feminist-literary approach focusing on the madwoman in the attic; some might prefer such an approach. Others would like to see well enough left alone. Many, however, will be mesmerized by the theatrical world created from Charlotte Brontë's gothic romance by the L.A. songwriter Paul Gordon and his collaborator, John Caird, who are returning the story to its proper melodramatic roots, using Gordon's pop-ballad melodies to enhance mood and drama. One reason for optimism is the track



Jane Eyre

record of the creative team. Caird, the director and co-librettist, has won Tony Awards for his work on two adaptations of nineteenth-century novels—*Les Misérables* and the Royal Shakespeare Company's acclaimed *The Life and Times of Nicholas Nickleby*. The production designer John Napier and the costumer Andreane Neofitou both worked with Caird on *Les Mis*. Chris Parry made a previous pre-Broadway foray at La Jolla Playhouse, when he created his Tony-winning lighting design for The Who's *Tommy* there. Even English majors will take guilty pleasure in soaring Rochester-Jane romantic duets and a first-person narration delivered—in a brilliant stroke—by the ensemble as a sort of psychic chorus. —J.I.

IRELAND'S CHEKHOV

From the sophisticated comedy of Sheridan and Wilde to Boucicault's melodrama, Shaw's social satire, and Samuel Beckett's endgame absurdism, the wee isle off the west coast of Britain has provided more than its share of the world's theatrical sparkle during the past two centuries. Lately the Irish invasion has been particularly widespread, with plays by Conor McPherson, Marina Carr, Billy Roche, Sebastian Barry, and the Irish pretender Martin McDonagh occupying U.S. stages. It's only fitting, therefore, that this summer Lincoln Center Festival '99 refocuses attention on the current granddaddy of Irish drama, Brian Friel, and celebrates his seventieth birthday with a trio of imported productions. Friel, Tyrone-born and Donegal-based, is descended from writers like Synge and O'Casey, whose plays are determinedly rooted in their country's idiosyncratic rural spirit, character, and language. Although Friel made his Broadway debut more than thirty years ago, his lyrical evocations of the



Brian Friel

fictional village of Ballybeg are most familiar to Americans from *Dancing at Lughnasa*, recently made into a film starring Meryl Streep. Lincoln Center Festival '99 offers a cross-section of his career: the venerable Abbey Theatre stages *The Freedom of the City* (an investigation into the personal costs of civil strife during "the Troubles," last seen on Broadway in 1974); the Abbey's fellow Dublin institution, the Gate, brings *The Aristocrats* and Friel's adaptation of *Uncle Vanya* in an award-winning production directed by Ben Barnes. The last is particularly apt, because more than the work of any other writer, Friel's has an affinity with Chekhov's. His characters' chipper but invariably unfulfilled aspirations become enveloped in a melancholy as thick as an Innisfree fog. —J.I.

Nancy Dalva's essays appear in the magazine twice. John Istel is the editor-in-chief of Stagebill.

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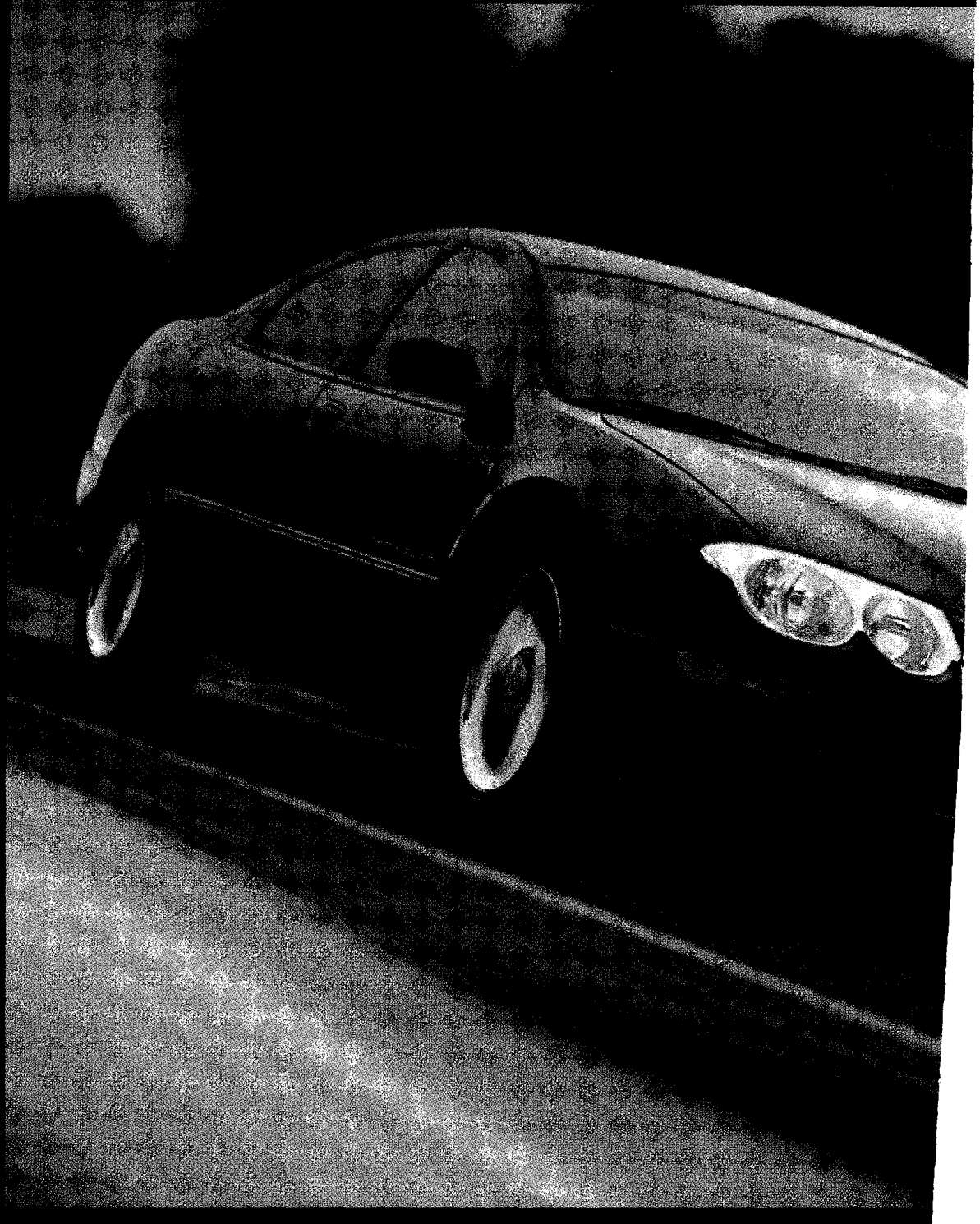
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POPULAR MUSIC AND JAZZ

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

MUDDY WATERS & SON

The last name of Morganfield will catch the eye of any blues fan, but Big Bill? Who's that? It was McKinley Morganfield—as Muddy Waters—who helped to electrify the blues and radiated an astonishing alpha-male authority. When he sang “I’m your hoochie coochie man,” nobody was going to contradict him. On *Rising Son* (Blind Pig), Big Bill Morganfield declares to the world that he is his father’s son. In his early forties, Morganfield waited a good long time to make his debut, supporting himself as a teacher for many years. But where rock demands youth and rebellion, the blues thrives on accumulated life experience. Morganfield sounds like he means it, and that might not have been the case if he had just announced “I’m Muddy’s son” in his early twenties. Having paid some dues, and having learned how to write songs, he’s stepping onto the stage with an earned, as well as inherited, authority. Which isn’t to say he doesn’t sound like



Big Bill Morganfield

his father. Morganfield has that Muddy growl down, conveying threat, sex, ecstasy, and just plain fun in about equal parts. What’s surprising here is how effortlessly his own songwriting blends in with classics by Willie Dixon (“The Same Thing”), Howlin’ Wolf (“Baby How Long”), and his father (“Screamin’ & Cryin’”). If you’ve ever been dead-ass broke, then Morganfield’s “Dead Ass Broke” will feel like an instant classic. His band swings and throws a large bucket of sweat on the proceedings. If that isn’t enough neo-Muddy music, you might want to check out *A Tribute to Muddy Waters: King of the Blues* (Hybrid). Several cuts above the average tribute album (in fact, all fourteen cuts are above the average tribute album), it brings together such diverse artists as Koko Taylor, John Hiatt, Buddy Guy, Peter Wolf, and the above-mentioned Big Bill Morganfield in a true all-star lineup, backed by the G. E. Smith House Band. They all sound different, and they all sound like Muddy.

—C.M.Y.

HOW SWEET IT IS

Based in Toronto, Big Sugar has gone platinum in Canada and is now making its U.S. debut with *Heated* (Capricorn), accurately named because, indeed, it’s hot. One of those

rare rock-and-roll bands that is both highly original and highly accessible, Big Sugar combines monstrously catchy guitar bashing (the leader, Gordie Johnson, has a profound understanding of the Marshall roar)

with dub beats, a booming bass, and a variety of other influences that somehow blend perfectly in the songwriting. It’s odd to say that a band that’s loud and given to grand gestures amid psychedelic jams doesn’t show off, but it’s true.

Everything’s subordinated to the song, much in the spirit of AC/DC. The production jumps right out of your speakers, even at moderate volume, although high volume is recommended for maximum headbanging invigoration. Big Sugar will be touring. Bring your earplugs.

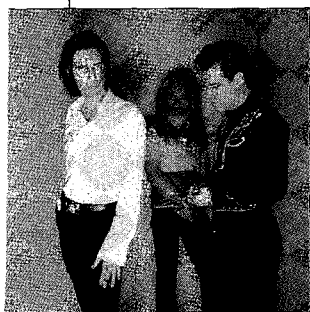
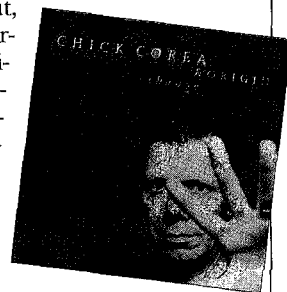
—C.M.Y.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe. Charles M. Young reviews popular music for Playboy, Musician, and other publications.

SIX POINTS OF ORIGIN

Chick Corea has worked in many configurations: solo pianist, duo partner with the vibist Gary Burton, leader of the guitar-driven fusion ensembles Return to Forever and The Chick Corea Elektric Band. When he formed the acoustic sextet Origin, in 1997, it was both a variation on the three-horns-and-rhythm configuration that stars like Cannonball Adderley and Art Blakey once deployed so successfully and an overdue opportunity for Corea to exercise arranging talents that have always been overshadowed by his playing and composing. *Change* (Concord/Stretch), Origin’s second album, places greater emphasis on writing than did the extended-blowing tracks from the band’s eponymous debut, which only underscores how intelligently Corea assembled this little-known yet supremely talented crew. Steve Wilson and Bob Sheppard are more than just inventive saxophonists (alto and tenor, respectively); they are equally fluent and personal on flute, clarinet, and bass clarinet. With Steve Davis’s trombone as the band’s brass voice, rather than a trumpet, Corea has the components for the range of fluent, highly arresting colorations that define the ten compositions. The bassist Avishai Cohen and the drummer Jeff Ballard make a rhythm section that is equally inspired, and provides a frame for piano solos that are typically brisk and inviting on first hearing, and reveal more complex and turbulent emotions on repeated listening. The ever-inquisitive Corea is even heard briefly on vibes, although his old friend Burton frequently handles the mallets as a special guest in concert appearances.

—B.B.



Big Sugar

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(Continued from page 18)

percent of new places were reserved for such children, for whom the voucher would cover tuition. To Friedman, these are unacceptable intrusions on schools' freedom to operate as they like, turning vouchers into "a welfare program, not an education program."

WITHOUT a link to unions—which, despite the waning of their influence, remain one of the few sources of progressive ideas in American public

A "grand bargain": combine a bigger road test for vouchers with increased per-pupil spending.



life—liberal pro-voucher champions have had little political impact. The muting of their voice, combined with the ease of legislating pilot programs, explains why few urban children have a choice today. What's more, deceptive arguments by both teachers' unions and conservative activists keep the broader public confused.

Teachers' unions (and voucher foes generally) rely on five dubious arguments.

There's no evidence that vouchers work. The trials have been so isolated, unions say, that their results are unproved. That's a nervy case to make when it is union opposition that has kept the trials small. Pro- and anti-voucher forces have funded research in Milwaukee and Cleveland that purports to show why Johnny is doing demonstrably better or worse under vouchers. It is impossible to make sense of these dueling studies, whose sample sizes are so small that results seem to turn on whether, say, three children in Cleveland handed in their homework on time. Wealthy conservatives are now offering vouchers to all 14,000 at-risk children in a poor San Antonio district in part so as to compile a

broader database from which to judge the impact of voucher systems. (In the first semester of the program 566 children taking vouchers left district schools.) For now the "no evidence" argument says more about union chutzpah than about voucher performance.

Vouchers drain money from public schools. Sandra Feldman, of the American Federation of Teachers, says that the \$10 million Cleveland uses to give vouchers to 4,000 children would be better spent on measures that would benefit every child, such as shrinking class sizes and launching proven reading programs. But this is disingenuous. Cleveland provided the \$10 million in addition to more than \$600 million in existing school spending in order to mollify unions, which insisted that vouchers not "come out of the hide" of public schools. It's unfair for unions to turn around and complain that the extra cash they insisted on should have gone elsewhere. The truth is that public schools are free to fund such measures now by shifting priorities within their budgets. And when broader voucher plans let the amount that public schools receive per student follow students who leave the system, the public-school coffers are not drained—schools receive the resources their enrollment merits.

Vouchers are unconstitutional. Some critics say that voucher use at religious schools violates the Constitution's ban on "establishment of religion," but the better view of the Supreme Court's confusing jurisprudence here suggests that's wrong. After all, no one thinks that federal student loans are unconstitutional when they are used by students to attend Notre Dame. Last June, Wisconsin's highest court upheld Milwaukee's plan, because the voucher goes to parents to use where they like, not to any particular type of school. In union hands, moreover, this legal complaint seems suspiciously tactical. It can't be that we are constitutionally obligated to imprison urban children in failing schools.

The capacity isn't there. Public schools serve 46 million K-12 children, private schools six million. Since private schools can't accommodate more than a fraction of today's students, opponents say, vouchers can't be a meaningful part of school reform. "Where are these schools going to come from?" Sandra Feldman repeatedly asked during an interview with me.

The first response to this argument is to ask, Then what's the problem? If as a practical matter unions feel that most children with vouchers will remain where they are, it's hard to see what the harm is in trying them. A second response is that even relatively few defections from public schools may spur efforts to improve them. Districts with innovative charter schools have reported such a reaction.

The larger answer, however, is that broader voucher schemes would prompt many institutions and entrepreneurs to add schools and spaces to the "market." This would happen not overnight but over a number of years. The initial spaces would be likely to come from Catholic schools, which account for half the private-school slots in the country. Jerome Porath, the schools chief for the Los Angeles archdiocese, says that if every student got a voucher worth an amount close to the current per-pupil expenditure in California, over several years enough facilities could be built or rented "to accommodate everybody who wanted to come." "We'll get out our spreadsheets and figure it out," he says. Milton Friedman adds, "You can't think of it in terms of the existing stock of schools. There will be a flood of new schools started."

Profit is bad. Voucher foes act as if there were something venal about the profit motive when applied to schools. But public education is already big business. The \$320 billion spent last year on K-12 schooling is lusted after by textbook publishers, test designers, building contractors, food and janitorial services, and software companies, to name only a few examples. This largesse inevitably brings scandals—for example, the California flap in 1996 over whether campaign contributions influenced a big textbook purchase. Like health care, defense, and other major public services, schools will always be partly about business; vouchers would simply change who controls the flow of cash. There's no reason to think that the abuses under a voucher system would be worse than abuses today.

Voucher foes make other unpersuasive claims. They say that vouchers will cream off the most-talented children and the most-active parents—a worry that seems acute primarily because today's voucher plans remain tiny. They say that private schools will unfairly be able to avoid troublemaking kids by not admitting them—ignoring the fact that public

districts themselves often send such kids to special schools of “last resort.” They say the oversight that will follow public money will make private schools resemble public bureaucracies—ignoring the greater flexibility that most analysts say such schools will retain in hiring and firing, resource allocation, and curriculum design. Finally, they argue that it is crazy to subsidize more-affluent parents who already pay for private school—a seemingly powerful charge until one recalls that such families are now paying twice for schools, and that vouchers offered only to poor families would avoid the problem entirely.

For their part, conservative voucher fans peddle one big misconception: vouchers can save lots of money because per-pupil spending in private schools is typically less than half that in public schools today. It is true that religious schools have fewer administrators and lower-paid teachers, and invest less in such amenities as theaters, labs, and gymnasiums. But private schools don’t have to take costly disabled and “special education” children; and often public schools

must offer extras such as English as a Second Language, breakfast and lunch programs, and transportation. When such differences are taken into account, and hidden subsidies for church space and staff in religious schools are counted, the gap shrinks. Coons says that a voucher’s value needs to be no lower than 85 percent of total per-pupil spending in order to stimulate capital investment in new schools. Set it too low, and the result will be simply to fill the handful of empty Catholic-school seats.

The right’s claim that vouchers will deliver big savings also ignores the case for spending more in many big cities, where dilapidated buildings may collectively require as much as \$50 billion in repairs. Some public school bureaucracies—Washington, D.C., and St. Louis come to mind—seem so hopeless that it would be senseless to pour new money in until management has improved. But despite run-down buildings and higher proportions of special-needs students, cities such as Philadelphia and Baltimore spend substantially less per pupil than do their states overall.

DISINGENUOUS rhetoric, visceral distrust, maximal posturing, minimal progress. Political debates escape this kind of dead end when grassroots pressure makes the status quo untenable, or when leaders emerge with fresh ways of framing the issues. It’s possible that urban schools will fall so far that the poor revolt; or crime, bred by ignorance, might worsen in ways that force society to act. There’s a better path to hope for, however, if new leaders can teach us to think differently about today’s predicament.

Sounds of rethinking and compromise are in the air. Arthur Levine, the president of Columbia University’s Teachers College, is a lifelong liberal and a voucher foe. Yet, frustrated by the seemingly hopeless troubles of inner cities, Levine called last June for a “rescue operation” that would give vouchers to two to three million poor children at the worst urban public schools. “For me,” Levine says, “it’s the equivalent of Schindler’s list.” Lisa Graham Keegan, Arizona’s superintendent of public instruction and a rising Republican star, calls the property-tax base for school fi-

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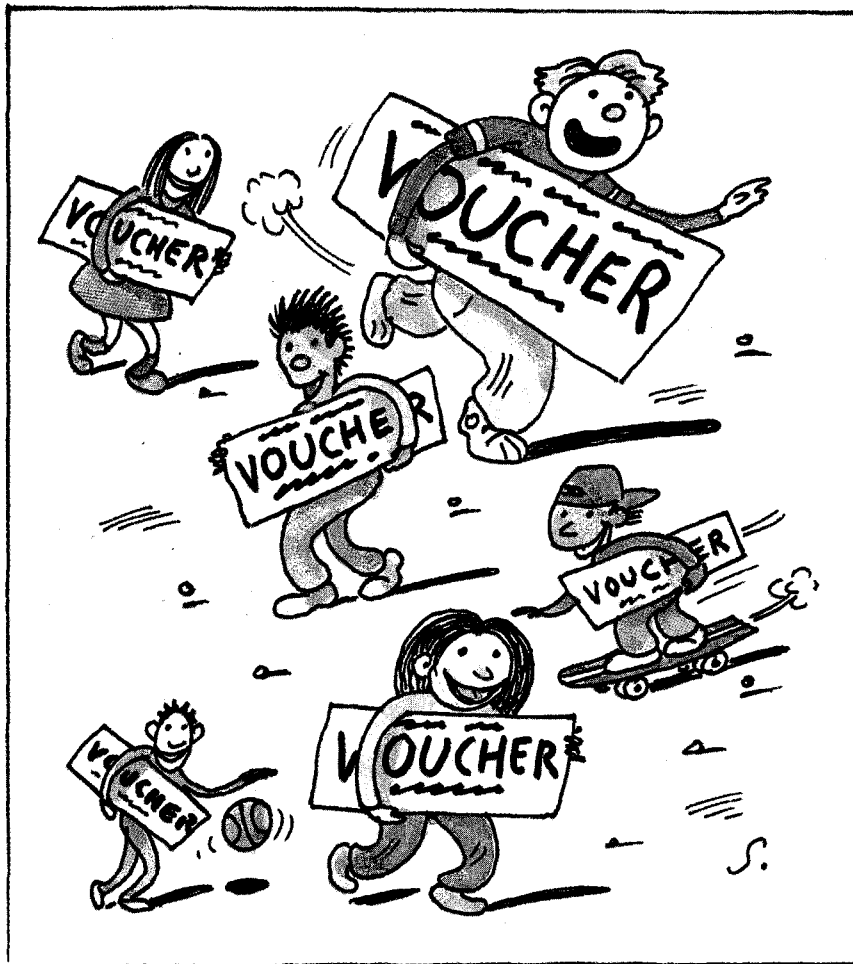
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nance "pernicious" and "wholly unfair." She wants a system of "student-centered funding," in which revenues from a source other than property taxes would be distributed by the state on an equal per-pupil basis through vouchers.

If leading liberals are willing to question the public school monopoly, and prominent conservatives hear the call of justice, the voucher debate has a chance to move forward. The sensible first step would be a much bigger road test. Here's the idea I have put to various players in the debate: Suppose everyone came together and said, Let's take three or four big cities where we agree the public schools are failing. (Leave out dens of mismanagement like Newark and Washington, where spending is high but ineffective.) In these cities we'll raise per-pupil spending by 20 percent, giving urban schools the resources the left says they need, and thus going far to achieve the Coons vision of funding equity. But we'll implement this increase by way of a universal voucher system that finally gives every child a choice. So, for example, in a city that now spends \$5,000 per

pupil, every child would get a \$6,000 voucher.

Such a proposal, serving half a million children, would cost \$660 million a year. If the voucher system were then extended to all six million big-city children (a logical step if results of the trial were promising), the price tag would be \$8 billion a year, or 0.4 percent of federal spending. (For purposes of discussion, I left aside the question of who outside the district would fund the 20 percent increase, though the surplus-rich federal government comes readily to mind.) The responses to this idea suggest how quickly the scale of today's debate could change—and who is responsible if it doesn't.

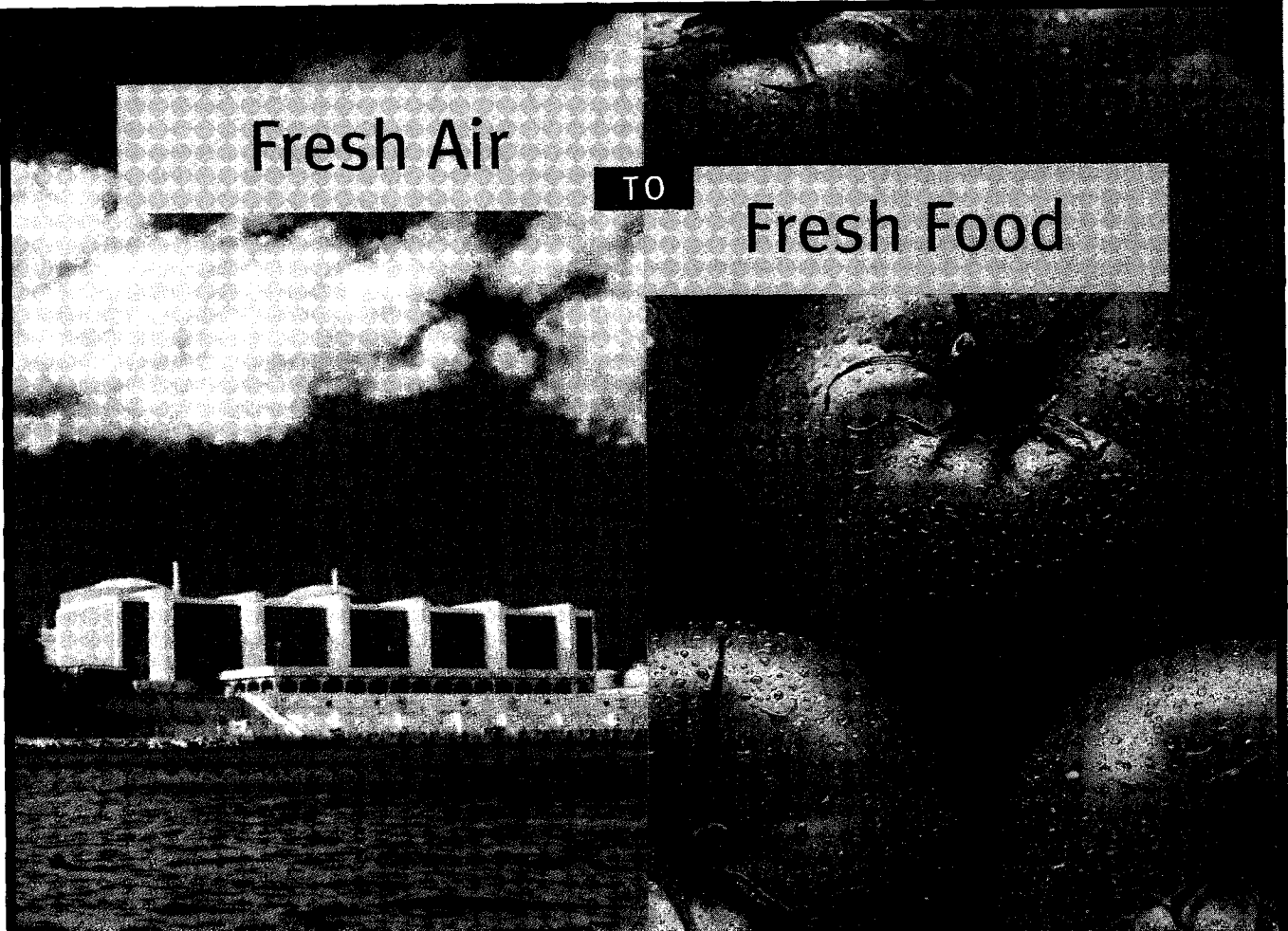
Jack Coons, the "egalitarian," said it sounds great. Clint Bolick, a conservative lawyer who is active in the voucher movement, also thought it could work—though, he said, the spending increase would mean that "some of my fellow conservatives would have apoplexy." Polly Williams, who led the drive to enact vouchers in Milwaukee, was anxious about extending them to students who

aren't poor, so we agreed to give them only to children eligible for the federal school-lunch program. This would still get vouchers to 78,000 children in Milwaukee instead of the current 6,000, and to four million city children nationwide. We would move pretty far toward universal coverage this way, since, sadly, two out of three city children qualify for school-lunch assistance.

What about the NAACP? To date the organization has welcomed philanthropic efforts, but when public funds are at issue, it stands by the unions. Julian Bond, the chairman of the NAACP, recently called vouchers "pork for private schools." Yet when I asked Kweisi Mfume, the NAACP president, about this proposal, he didn't hesitate. "I don't have a problem with that at all," he said. Mfume says that NAACP opposition has been not ideological but based on three concerns: the association doesn't want programs that leave nearly every child out; it wants accountability to the public on student performance; and it wants an honest approach to higher costs—such as those for transportation—that must be paid to make the system work for poor children. The pilot programs in Milwaukee and Cleveland fail especially on grounds one and three; the bargain I sketched addresses them. Mfume said he was open to the proposal as long as the NAACP's concerns were met, even if that meant taking a stance different from the unions'.

"It's a bad idea," Milton Friedman said at first, arguing that any increase in spending would "fuel the racketeers in the education business." Friedman's point is that raising spending could create further opportunities for profit-hungry operators to take the vouchers and run schools much more efficiently—not to their benefit. Owing to systematic federal overpayments, Medicare HMOs face just such scams in many places today.

But outliers like Washington, D.C., aside, it's not clear that urban schools are overspending. Given that, isn't it worth running a little risk to get a substantial voucher test under way? It seemed that Friedman wouldn't sign on, but toward the end of our discussion he relented. "I'll tell you what I would go for," he said. Friedman has always believed that so many families would flee public schools if given a voucher worth even half what is now spent per pupil that resources for



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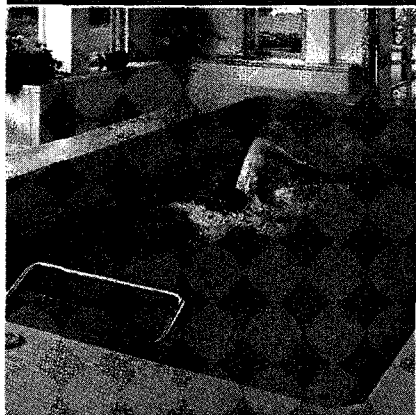
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each child remaining in the system would rise. (If ten public school children have \$5,000 spent on each of them, and three leave taking \$2,500 each, spending on the seven remaining would rise about 20 percent, to just under \$6,100.) So he would approve of a 20 percent increase in per-pupil spending for those who remained, as long as the voucher was worth only half that. Since Friedman thinks that this 20 percent increase will come over time anyway, he's not compromising his ideals. His principled accommodation is to put his money where his beliefs are and increase spending up front as part of the deal.

But look where we are. Baltimore spends \$6,400 per pupil today—versus \$6,800 spent by Maryland overall. According to Mfume's reasoning, the NAACP would accept a citywide voucher at roughly \$7,600. Friedman could live with \$7,600 for current public school pupils but would want a voucher for departing students at \$3,800. Surely there's a deal to be made here—and a chance, therefore, to help millions of children while meaningfully evaluating voucher efficacy, addressing questions about everything from student achievement to private profiteering.

What about the politicians? Lamar Alexander seems the likeliest to raise these issues thoughtfully in the 2000 election campaign; as a former Tennessee governor and the Secretary of Education under George Bush, he knows more about schooling than any other presidential aspirant. He has also been down this road before. Alexander bears scars from his ill-fated 1992 struggle to enact a voucher test at the federal level. Called the G.I. Bill for Kids, the plan would have spent \$500 million in new federal dollars to give the parents of half a million low- and middle-income children each a \$1,000 voucher to use at the schools of their choice. Alexander wagered (correctly) that conservative groups would be content with tiny sums of new money to get their foot in the door, and (incorrectly) that new cash for schools would be something the unions couldn't be seen opposing. In a Democratic Congress the bill went nowhere. Today Alexander says he would urge states to shift toward child-centered funding. And he'd go to Congress with an updated version of Bush's 1992 bill, featuring \$1,500 per voucher and an overall \$1 billion price tag.

I asked Alexander if he wasn't thinking too small: \$1,500 vouchers would be nowhere near sufficient to spark the creation of new schools. And with vouchers spread thin across the country, he would get no trial of how broad-based choice can improve schooling in a community. Why not try the 20 percent spending boost in exchange for universal vouchers in a few cities?

The voluble Alexander went silent for perhaps fifteen seconds as he considered whether to go on record in favor of a policy that would raise spending substantially—something that conservative primary voters would reject.

At length he said yes. Higher per-pupil spending wouldn't be his preferred solution, of course, but if that's what it took to get a bold voucher plan into failing cities, he'd live with it. "I would go high because the stakes are high," he explained, "and to expose the hypocrisy of the unions. If I told the National Education Association that we'd double it in the five largest cities, they wouldn't take it."

Was he right? I met with Bob Chase, the president of the National Education Association, in the union's headquarters in Washington. He made the familiar case

*Democrats should
see large-scale urban
voucher programs
as an opportunity,
not a threat.*



for why vouchers are ineffectual today and would be a threatening distraction for public schools if tried more broadly. Only 25 percent of the adult population has children in the schools, he explained. We need to help the other 75 percent understand why financial support of schools is important. In this regard I sketched the deal: a handful of cities, higher spending, but only through vouchers. My tape recorder captured the staccato response.

"Is there any circumstance under which that would be something that . . ."

"No."

"... you guys could live with? Why?"

"No."

"Double school spending . . ."

"No."

"... in inner cities?"

"No."

"Triple it . . ."

"No."

"... but give them a voucher?"

"'Cause, one, that's not going to happen. I'm not going to answer a hypothetical [question] when nothing like that is ever possible."

"But teachers use hypotheticals every day."

"Not in arguments like this we don't. . . . It's pure and simply not going to happen. I'm not even going to use the intellectual processes to see if in fact that could work or not work, because it's not going to happen. That's a fact."

Sandra Feldman was similarly unwilling to consider such a plan. If new money is available for cities, both said, it should be spent to improve the existing system. They would fund pay raises to attract teachers to work downtown, turnaround programs for troubled schools, and general urban programs for health, nutrition, and parenting skills. Of course, pay raises—or smaller class sizes, or any specific reform—could happen under vouchers, if that's what schools felt was needed to attract students.

IF one believes that urban education won't improve under the same approach that has failed for years, the path to progress through vouchers follows a simple logic. A progressive hand is needed to pursue the benefits of vouchers without risk to the poor. A number of conservatives are open to such efforts if they make possible larger voucher trials. Given the disastrous state of many urban schools, the Democratic Party should be the natural home of this progressive influence. It is not, because teachers' unions loom large in Democratic fundraising and campaigns. Yet the Republicans' commitment to minorities will probably never be trusted to carry this issue alone. And, not unreasonably, Republicans are unlikely to increase spending for urban schools without ensuring that such increases are tied to system-wide reform.

Changing the Democratic Party's approach to vouchers is therefore the only way to do something serious for urban children anytime soon. This conclusion begets another political syllogism, and an opportunity. Most observers believe that if the NAACP embraced vouchers, it would force the unions to reassess their opposition. Teacher intransigence is sustainable only as long as minority leaders support it, because the children whose future is being blighted are mostly black and Hispanic. Yet as Kweisi Mfume makes clear, getting the NAACP to change its stance would require voucher plans much bolder and more comprehensive than today's pilots.

Thus thinking bigger makes progress likelier. "That's why I've taken the more radical side," explains Floyd Flake, who quit Congress to run his church school and pursue these issues. "It's the only way to force the debate."

At some level even the unions know that their stonewalling is indefensible. "I would never argue with an individual parent who wanted to figure out a way to get his or her child into a better situation," Sandra Feldman says. "But to me, as a matter of public policy, that's not a good argument. The objective is to make the schools good—not to escape them."

But what if the ability to escape might help to make the schools better? And what if testing this proposition can't make anyone worse off? Yes, big voucher plans may require an act of faith, but it wouldn't be the first gamble in American education to work. A much smaller federal government rolled the dice on land-grant colleges in the 1860s with only a notion of what would happen; the research they sparked made U.S. agriculture the world's most productive. The G.I. Bill helped to spawn the postwar middle class. The moral urgency of today's voucher gamble is much greater. For all these reasons, Democrats should see large-scale urban voucher programs as an opportunity, not a threat. After all, once they embraced such a grand bargain, Democrats would be in the driver's seat. They retain, at least for now, the moral authority to speak in behalf of the disadvantaged, and Republicans would not be able to shrink from solutions they have long sought. The alternative is a Democratic Party that favors its funders at the expense of its constituents. ☞

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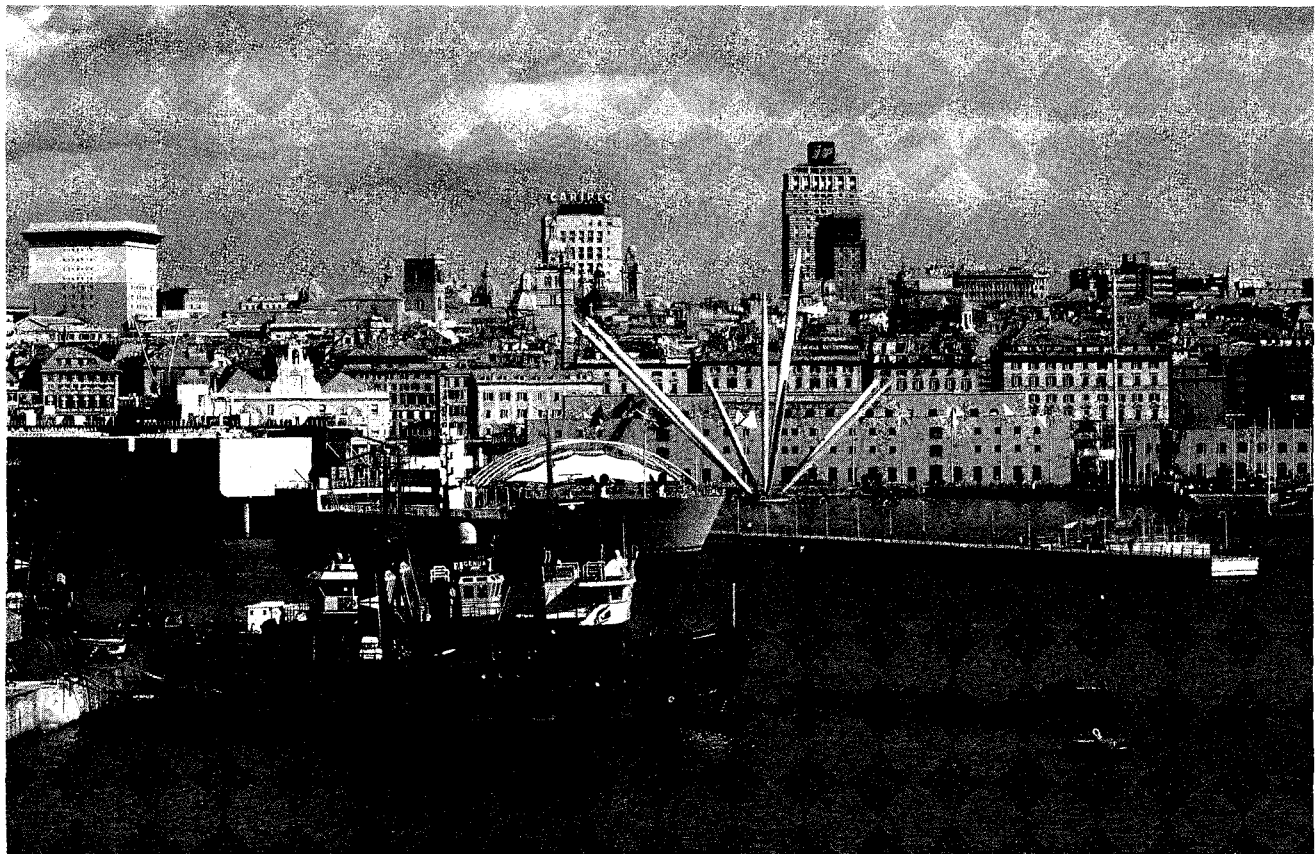
GENOA has been badly neglected by tourism in the twentieth century, though it was for a thousand years one of the two great Italian trade and banking ports in the Mediterranean, the other being Venice. Before our era Genoa was celebrated by such giants of art and literature as Peter Paul Rubens,

by Peter Davison

Gustave Flaubert, Henry James, and Joseph Conrad. It long maintained close relations with the Low Countries, whose painters, ranging from Rogier van der Weyden to Anthony Van Dyck, worked in Genoa for years on end. When the great empires of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries directed Europe's

attention to more-distant regions of the world, Genoa, long Venice's rival for dominance of Mediterranean trade, diminished in world importance. Venice, floating at the head of the Adriatic, continued to brandish its glories for the traveler, while Genoa receded, somewhat like Marseilles. In the nineteenth century it became the port of entry for the rising industries of Turin and Milan, but Italy's unfortunate choice of sides in the Second World War resulted in a horrid vengeance on the city, for the British bombed the port to keep German ships from supplying Nazi military efforts, and the Germans held on to it till the very end. The city had a lot to recover from, and its restoration is even now not quite complete. Lately I was lucky enough to spend a month nearby; with increasing pleasure on each daily excursion, I explored Genoa at leisure. It's a marvel.

Genoa is suitable for travelers who are tired of finding themselves in a crowd of people very much like themselves. Its Mediterranean microclimate makes it a delicious destination in the spring or fall,



STEVE BLY/TONY STONE, TOP, MARCELLO MENCARINI/RAZIA NERI

The port, with Renzo Piano's Bigo front and center; top, a statue of native son Cristoforo Colombo

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when other regions of Italy, even some of those to the south, may prove dubious. Its lush, palm-tree-studded, bougainvillea-swathed surroundings—Ventimiglia and the French Riviera to the west; Rapallo, Portofino, and the Cinque Terre to the east—are not only enticing and varied but lend themselves to easy access by inexpensive public transportation. For those, like me, who find crowds of fellow tourists a barrier to understanding, the city itself is a wonderful place in which to take your mind on a walk. The immense and heavily trafficked seaport is only now beginning once again to be visited by cruise ships from outside Italy. Genoa has been working at the art of urban life for a couple of *thousand years*, but its magic for me is the medieval immediacy that is perpetuated in its back streets, in a style that can hardly be found anywhere else on such a scale. When I visited its museums and churches, last fall, I found myself nearly alone.

THE city is built on abrupt slopes that rise steeply from sea level, after a pause above the shoreline, to considerable heights not very distant from the coast. Ancient fortifications atop the hills were erected long ago to defend against the inboard depredations of the Lombards and others. When you look at Genoa from above, it resembles, as the Genoa native Eugenio Montale once wrote, “a snake who has swallowed a rabbit whole, and is unable to digest it.” The principal east-west streets extend at narrow intervals for miles along the shoreline. Maps severely foreshorten the north-south distances: a street that looks very close to its neighbor may in fact lie thirty feet above it and peer over its head. The general prosperity of the city tends to rise with the altitude of the neighborhood, so that the richest quarters stand highest on the hills—or second-highest. The rich bourgeoisie of Genoa, and there are plenty of them, take their pleasure in districts high enough above the city to admit a

great view of the sea but nearly close enough to downtown to let a person lob a banana into one of the two train stations.

If you were to stand on a terrace up there on a brilliantly clear day, you might see Corsica, a former Genoese possession, far off on the southern horizon. Closer in and still southward you would see a vast port unfolding beneath and straight ahead, the oldest harbor innermost, the outer,



A city shaped by sea and slope

broader port crowded with a number of white ocean ferries at their piers, and marine-freight traffic threading its self-absorbed way into and out of the Ligurian Sea between two outspread arms of land. (If shipping interests you, as it does me, you might think of taking a forty-five-minute harbor cruise, during which an Italian guide will tell you exactly what kind of freight is shipped to or from each pier; which ships carry wine, vegetable oil, machine parts, automobiles, or limestone, to which ports; when the ships will depart; and what—pineapples, coal, petroleum, coffee—they will carry back.)

Just beyond the ancient Lanterna, a tower as familiar to the Genoese as the Statue of Liberty is to New Yorkers, lie industrial port facilities, the smoke of power plants and oil refineries, and the buzz and bustle of Genoa's nearby airport.

In that terrace view the old city, looking very jammed up indeed, lies at one's feet. In the middle distance is the central business district; off to the left are the palace of the dukes of Genoa (now a center for art exhibitions and lectures) and the opera house, the restored nineteenth-century Teatro Carlo Felice. Straight ahead and closer is the great Strada Nuova (modern name: Via Garibaldi), built up during Shakespeare's lifetime for conspicuous display by the opulent bankers of the sixteenth century; here the gate of each residence offers a gaudy challenge to the one across the street—architecture that Rubens celebrated in a book depicting the great palaces of Genoa that he published in 1607. Next, beyond the Renaissance district and a little to the right, sloping down to the waterfront, jut the tops of the old six- and seven-story *palazzi* that make up medieval Genoa, a rabbit warren of streets and alleyways, entrances, shops, memorials, chapels, and cubbyholes. The medieval district approaches the edge of the inner harbor and then opens out to turn the harbor view over to the banking houses, the port frontage called the Ripa, and the piers

that have allowed inviting opportunities for modern architects and planners to unleash the forces of the contemporary city. Not all those opportunities have yet been accepted.

The history of the inner-harbor waterfront is too complex to describe here, but it was from this shore that Crusaders embarked to free Jerusalem from the infidel, and from here the Genoese sent slave-powered galleys to the great naval battle of Lepanto, in 1571, to defend Europe from the perceived threat of the Turks (and to take many of them as slaves). Above the immediate waterfront the prin-



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principal streets are studded with a wide variety of shops, selling goods ranging from electric shavers to garish women's underwear to upscale men's hats. (I chose a jaunty green number *alla moda bersagliera*, and left the apparent bargains in electric clippers, with their Italian wiring, to the Italians.) At right angles to the east-west streets, the north-south *carruggi* (narrow alleyways that run downhill toward the water) seem to shelter rather too many lingering figures, the males wary and slightly menacing, the apparently idle females strolling slowly in skirts too short. I watched one of these women reach over to a female companion and undo two buttons on her blouse, to encourage business.

Higher up the hillside (take the wider streets rather than the *carruggi*) you may find your way to gems of Genoese architecture and sculpture. The most ancient church in Genoa, Santa Maria di Castello, is built in a cluster of cloisters, side chapels, and inner gardens on the site of Roman fortifications and of a medieval castle that guarded the harbor. On the Piazza San Matteo the great Doria family of Genoa built palaces, striped in black and white

stone, around a neatly proportioned square, so that they might gaze into their neighboring cousins' eyes. And the museum at the old church of Sant' Agostino houses, and charmingly displays, the most impressive concentration of Italian medieval sculpture I have seen anywhere. A special delight is the 1980s School of Architecture of the University of Genoa, foresightedly planted in the center of a run-down neighborhood to help rehabilitate it. The school incorporates a variety of the oldest ruins in the city, on seven or eight levels of terraces rising above the harbor to a rooftop garden, which yields the most impressive of all views of both the port and the surrounding hills. Be sure to get there during class hours, because the gate is closed on weekends. The students won't be distracted by your visit, engaged as they are in companionship and flirtation.

Looking down from the School of Architecture, you would understand why Genoa is not by any stretch a city impris-

oned by its complicated past. Along the waterfront, between the water and the Ripa, modern architects and planners have been devising schemes to make the port a place for pleasure. Renzo Piano's Bigo, a white structure composed of eight long booms (one of which supports a glittering world's-fair-style elevator), is flanked on the water side by an ice rink and on the other side by the Palazzo San Giorgio. Across the docks from the Bigo stands a huge and gorgeous aquarium, as charmingly organized as any I have seen, with explanatory signs in English as well as Italian, built by Piano in collaboration with Cambridge Seven, of Massachusetts.



The painted façade of the Palazzo San Giorgio

Back up the hill, in the Piazza De Ferrari, behind the Teatro Carlo Felice, rises the somewhat oversized and self-promoting mass of Aldo Rossi's blocky, blotchy addition to it. In this and other Genoese piazzas you will encounter statues of Christopher Columbus or Giuseppe Verdi—or melodramatic ones of Victor Emmanuel II—that look as though they were commissioned, as models, by Saul Steinberg. In the Piazza Corvetto, among the most tolerable modern piazzas, look for a deft and elegant hotel, one of the Jolly chain. Just off Via XX Settembre is the Piazza Colombo, and near it the marvelous indoor food market of the Mercato Orientale. Restaurants, large and small, offer the visitor lovely dishes such as *trofie al pesto*, the famous Genoese *primo piatto* that combines fragments of fresh pasta, potatoes, string beans, and pesto, and a *fritto misto di pesce* that melts in your mouth. I have eaten the best tiramisù of my life in Genoa. And almond ice cream.

THE wines that come from the Ligurian hillsides, the local olive oil, and the bewildering variety of Mediterranean fish and shellfish delight not only the palate but the eye. It may at first seem odd that the Genoese cuisine tends, more than others, to bring dishes to the table that display the colors of the Italian flag—red, green, and white—until one remembers that above all other cities, Genoa cradled Italian nationalism, nurturing the Giuseppes Mazzini and Garibaldi, who, with Conte Camillo Benso di Cavour, were the heroic three of the Risorgimento that prepared the way for Italian unity in the nineteenth century. The patriotic fervor re-

minds travelers that cities exist not just to visit but to live—or to die—in. One of the most striking sights of Genoa is the nineteenth-century cemetery of Staglieno, elevated in a valley northeast of the center. This is one of the great burial places in Europe, a vast national mausoleum as well as the patriotic cemetery of the region.

On a rainy afternoon I took a taxi and visited Staglieno, pacing my way along long corridors that ascended by ramps and staircases through a forest of funerary marble sculpture toward the

summit of a hillside, where, beyond a dark grove of cypresses, I found the grave of Mazzini, with a generous Doric façade that seems to bulge out of the rock of the hill and stand there for all the idealism in Italian political life. Behind the tomb lies a vale where some of Garibaldi's "thousand" have been buried, companions in the struggle for Italian independence and unity. From this vantage the cemetery stretches out in all directions, behind and below, marble statues trying on every conceivable variation in the stonecutter's repertory. Just below Mazzini a little girl in bronze carries a bronze life preserver, the memorial to a swimming disaster in 1921. Farther down, as I was making my way out of the cemetery, a strangely familiar object caught my eye. It was a golden football helmet, American-style, face guard and all, set on top of the black-marble reclining monument to a young man who died in 1984 and whose photo, showing him in a football jersey carrying the number 41, was displayed beside the

helmet, with no further information as to his fate. Closer to the entrance is a small Jewish cemetery that is badly overgrown—testimony to a sad story from Genoa's past. The long German occupation of the city left it with only a tiny Jewish population to pay heed to the departed dead. Adjacent is a group of particularly histrionic statues commemorating the sacrifices that Italian military men have made *pro patria*. Some of history's ironies remain standing.

GENOA'S tortuous past reflects all sorts of conflict, but as every resident of Liguria knows, physically as well as metaphorically the road to survival leads uphill. The steepness of Genoa's hillsides, and those of other Ligurian destinations, does make them a dubious place for the walking-impaired to travel. There is no way to get home from any low-lying port or resort without climbing. All along the coast to the east and west of Genoa stand towns with a view of the sea (Camogli, Rapallo, Portofino, the Cinque Terre) and, behind them, others looking over their shoulders. Country people who cannot afford the seaside have to rise above it, and everywhere the traveler can see elderly people clambering upward like Sherpas, while young mothers with children take their *passeggiata* along the shore.

It is this very character, enforced by the Apennine spine of Italy, that makes Genoa Genoese—that makes it as different from, say, Venice as a place can be, and different from Rome and Milan, with their broad shopping streets. Naples echoes Genoa in geographic conformation, but the world of Liguria only superficially resembles the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Though their terrain looks alike, Rapallo, in Liguria, does not much resemble—in temperament, diet, climate, or ambiance—Ravello, on the Amalfi coast.

To visit Genoa is to gain some sense of the spirit of Liguria, a seacoast of resort towns. One of these, the Genoese suburb of Nervi, lies a fifteen-minute train ride from the center of town. Maritime shipping traverses the Ligurian Sea, tiny fishing boats bob just offshore day and night, and Vespas snarl along the Via Aurelia during rush hour. You may also find pleasant—or more than pleasant—hotels, trattorias, and even good shopping. But it will be Genoa, pulsing with history and energy at the center of the Ligurian coast, that crowns your visit. ☼

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THE TRUTH ABOUT DOGS

by STEPHEN BUDIAISKY

IF some advertiser or political consultant could figure out just what it is in human psychology that makes us willing to believe that dogs are loyal, trustworthy, selfless, loving, courageous, noble, and obedient, he could retire to his own island in the Caribbean in about a week with what he would make peddling that secret. Dogs belong to that select group of con artists at the very top of the profession, the ones who pick our pockets clean and leave us smiling about it. Dogs take from the rich, they take from the poor, and they keep it all. They lie on top of the air-conditioning vent in the summer; they curl up by the fireplace in the winter; they commit outrages against our property too varied and unspeakable to name. They decide when we may go to bed at night and when we must rise in the morning, where we may go on vacation and for how long, whom we may invite over to dinner, and how we should decorate our living rooms. They steal the very bread from our plates (I'm thinking here of a collie I used to have whose specialty actually was toast). If we had roommates who behaved like this, we'd be calling a lawyer, or the police.

Biologists, if they weren't victims of the same blindness that afflicts us all, wouldn't hesitate to classify dogs as social parasites. This is the class of manipulative creatures exempli-



*Recent explorations into the field
of canine genetics are changing
the way we think about man's best
friend—"man's best parasite"
may be more like it—
and could help us repair the
damage done by a century
of inbreeding*

fied by the cuckoo, which lays its eggs in the nest of some poor unsuspecting dupe of a bird of another species. The befuddled parents see a big mouth crying out for food and stuff it full of worms at the expense of their own offspring. Every time they turn their backs, the cuckoo hatchling shoves another of their own flesh and blood overboard. The parents never seem to notice.

Dogs have not quite reached that point in their parasitism of human society. Still, it is sobering that the No. 1 behavioral problem that drives dog owners to seek professional help is aggression. And canine aggression is most often directed at children. In 1996 dog attacks cost U.S. insurance companies \$250 million in claims paid out, with total costs to society estimated at \$1 billion a year. By dog standards, though, a billion is nothing when

it comes to diverting the wealth of one's best friends; Americans spend more than \$5 billion a year on dog food and \$7 billion on canine veterinary care.

Add up all the benefits that dogs provide us and compare that sum with the costs, and it is not a rational bargain on our part. Dogs are extraordinarily beautiful animals; they are extraordinarily interesting animals too, and as a devoted student of animal behavior, if nothing else, I certainly find the rewards of living with dogs worth the cost. But I am also keenly aware that the conventional explanations of where dogs come

from, how they ended up in our homes, and why they do what they do for us have to be all wrong.

In the past couple of years new scientific evidence has started to confirm just how weird the relationship between dogs and human beings is—and how different it is from what we tend to think it is. What truly defines the differences between breeds of dogs, what motivates dogs to be protective or helpful to us, what causes aggressive behavior by dogs toward human beings, why dogs started hanging around us in the first place—when it comes to dogs, almost nothing is what it seems.

CANINE GENETICS

THE starting point for this scientific reconsideration of matters canine is an extremely modest effort, colloquially known as the Dog Genome Project. In scale it is nothing like the Human Genome Project, a \$3 billion federally sponsored program to map every gene in the human body. The dog project will cost a few million dollars, with a lot of the funding coming from private breed clubs that want to develop genetic tests for inborn diseases that their particular breeds are susceptible to.

Finding genes that cause this or that ailment is what most people think of when they think about gene mapping and genetic research, and pinpointing the causes of inborn diseases is certainly one of the obvious and direct payoffs that will come from a better understanding of the dog genome. But the genes an individual carries are more than a personal health chart; they are also a logbook of the evolutionary voyage of the species. The dog's journey through the past 100,000 years in the company of man has left distinctive markers in the genes of the dog population. Just as an archaeologist can deduce non-material attributes of a long-vanished civilization—its social hierarchies, superstitious beliefs, trading patterns—from its material remains, so geneticists can deduce much about the history, evolution, and social ecology of a species from the patterns that all those forces have etched into its genes.

Merely getting to the point where scientists can make a serious study of the dog genome has required something of a breakthrough in the culture of science. For years science has maintained a rather aloof stance toward domestic animals in general, and toward dogs in particular. Traditionally, zoologists have considered domestic animals to be uninteresting, and have generally classed them as “degenerates”—unworthy of ecological scrutiny because they have lost their adaptive behaviors. Veterinary medicine aside, it is as if molecular genet-

ics and the other great advances of twentieth-century science had simply bypassed the dog.

And then there is the fact that scientists can be as sentimental and uncritical about dogs as the rest of humanity seems to be. “Most scientists who talk about dogs have their scientist hat and their dumb hat,” says Gustavo Aguirre, a veterinary ophthalmologist at Cornell University's Baker Institute for Animal Health. “And whenever they start talking about dogs, they put on their dumb hat. They say things that as scientists they have to know can't possibly be right.” The upshot is that scientists know infinitely more about the genome of the mouse or the sheep or the fruit fly than they know about the genome of the dog; they know infinitely more about the social ecology of the ant or even the wolf than they know about the social ecology of the dog.

A few years ago Aguirre and several others decided to put on their scientists' hats and apply the tools of modern biology to the study of the dog genome. Their motivation was to try to understand the genetic roots of the particularly devastating inborn degenerative diseases that cause certain breeds—notably, miniature poodles, Norwegian elkhounds, Irish setters, collies, and cocker spaniels—to go blind. These diseases, characterized by night blindness followed by progressive deterioration of daytime vision, bear a striking similarity to the human condition known as retinitis pigmentosa.

Studying the causes of canine genetic diseases remains a central aim of their work, but over time the project acquired a broader objective: to construct a rough but comprehensive map of the entire dog genome, and with that to begin to understand what makes a dog be what it is and do what it does.

Aguirre likes to show visitors to his lab the “kennel.” This consists of four large stainless-steel chests containing row upon row of frozen blood samples chilled to -80° Celsius. For the genome map the researchers collected samples from 212 dogs representing three generations, all the products of crosses between dogs about as different as possible—poodles, Doberman pinschers, Irish setters, Norwegian elkhounds, and beagles. Fortunately for Aguirre and others in the field, dogs are particularly good for genetic studies. Unlike human beings, who tend to intermarry widely, dog breeds have been kept separate through inbreeding. Norwegian elkhounds, for example, are very different from beagles not only in the way they look and in the inborn diseases they get (beagles almost never suffer from degenerative blindness, for instance) but also in the many random bits of “junk” DNA that are found on every one of their chromosomes. Genes are the sequences of

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DNA on a chromosome that actually direct the body to do something. But long stretches of DNA between genes have simply accumulated over the course of evolution. Mutations in parts of the genome that do something important are often harmful, and tend to get weeded out of the population quickly, whereas mutations in the junk DNA just pile up, in random variations that can be used to distinguish one family line from another. As far as researchers are concerned, junk DNA sequences have another useful property: they tend to possess distinctive patterns that make it easy to construct a molecular “probe” that zeroes in on them.

What all this means is that researchers can use junk DNA sequences as flags or markers to help them find their way around the genome. If a beagle is crossed with an elkhound and then their offspring are crossed, some of those dogs will suffer from retinal degeneration and some won't. They will also almost certainly have many differences in the easy-to-measure genetic markers they carry. If all disease carriers have marker A at a particular spot on a chromosome whereas no noncarriers do, the disease gene must be close by.

Using this technique, Aguirre's lab and a group led by Elaine Ostrander, at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, in Seattle, created the first “linkage” map of the dog genome, which was published in late 1997. The map is made

up of about 150 mileposts along the dog genome; each milepost consists of a bit of junk DNA anchored to a gene that remains constant. The gene allows researchers to know where on the genome they are; the variable bits allow them to search for genetic differences between individuals, and so to tie a disease or other physical characteristic to a specific marker.

Another thing that dogs have going for them in terms of genetic mapping is that they produce a lot of offspring—litters of ten are not uncommon. Standard statistical calculations reveal that diseases that are all but impossible to map in human families can readily be mapped in the typical canine family. Already several genes responsible for canine disorders have been pinpointed, and screening tests have been developed for them. The Irish Setter Club of America, which was one of the first to support genetic research on its breed's problems, now has a blood test that it requires for all purebred Irish setters to determine if they are carrying a gene for retinal degeneration.

More-conventional sponsors of scientific research, such as the National Institutes of Health and the American Cancer Society, have begun to fund the study of canine genetics, because dog disease and human disease are turning out to be closely linked. More than twenty inborn diseases in dogs have been traced to specific defective genes; in every case the same defective gene has been found in human beings. Dogs even car-



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OOD



MENTS



ry the *brca1* gene, which was identified a few years ago as causing a significantly increased risk of breast cancer in women. Probably 90 to 95 percent of the dog genome and the human genome are identical.

From the start dog-genome researchers realized that along the way they might also discover a lot about the history of dogs and their innate behavior—the sorts of things that people who like dogs have always wondered about. No one expects to find a gene for loyalty, but maybe there are genes for herding behavior or retrieving or guarding. And although there is almost certainly not a gene, or even a handful of genes, that accounts for the transformation from the wolf to the dog, a study of the population genetics of the two species could potentially speak volumes about the origin and history of domestication.

PREHISTORIC DOG

THE standard myth about the origin of the dog is that man found him to be a useful companion and so took him in. Dogs were sentinels or shepherds or they helped in the hunt. The oldest archaeological evidence of dogs with a morphology distinct from that of wolves is from about 12,000 years ago in the Middle East, suggesting an evolution coinciding with the rise of the first agricultural settlements and permanent villages, and pre-dating the domestication of other animals, including sheep and goats, by a few thousand years.

The view that dogs came along at about the same time as human beings settled down is so widespread and so often repeated in standard texts that it is more than a bit surprising to find genetic evidence flatly contradicting it. The evidence comes from a study by Robert Wayne, an evolutionary biologist at the University of California at Los Angeles, who has applied the modern tools of genetic fingerprinting to dogs, coyotes, wolves, and jackals. He and his colleagues collected blood, tissue, or hair samples from 140 dogs of sixty-seven breeds and 162 wolves from three continents. To gauge how closely related these various canines were and when they might have diverged from a common ancestor, the scientists measured differences in their mitochondrial DNA. Mitochondria are like small cells within the cells of animals; they convert stored food into energy with the assistance of oxygen, and they also have the peculiarity—much cherished by geneticists—of reproducing asexually, independent of the rest of the cell. The regular DNA of an animal cell derives equally from both parents. Mitochondrial DNA, however, comes entirely from the mitochondrial DNA of the mother. In normal sexual reproduction genetic change from one generation to the next is very rapid, as the parental genes are mixed and remixed in new combinations. Mitochondrial DNA, in contrast, can change only by mutation, which takes place quite slowly—at a rate of around one or two percent every 100,000 years.

That means that mitochondrial DNA can be used as an evolutionary chronometer. Wolves and coyotes differ by about six

percent in their mitochondrial DNA, and, according to fossil evidence, separated from a common ancestor about a million years ago. Wolves and dogs differ by about one percent; using the wolf-coyote time scale, this suggests that they parted company about 135,000 years ago—a lot earlier than the date implied by the first distinctly non-wolflike dog fossil.

Wayne's study also definitively laid to rest an assertion made by both Charles Darwin and Konrad Lorenz—that more than one wild canid species had to have made an appearance in the dog's recent family tree, given the diversity of physical types and behaviors exhibited across the range of modern dog breeds. In fact, long sequences of dog mitochondrial DNA are similar or identical to those in gray wolves, and analysis of the highly variable markers in the regular DNA of dogs and wolves shows a considerable overlap there as well. Jackals and coyotes, though they can interbreed with dogs and produce fertile offspring, possess quite distinct groups of mitochondrial DNA sequences.

The evolutionary chronometer is a measure of ancient origins—it cannot pick up divergence into separate breeding lines that has occurred in the past few hundred years. The most striking discovery Wayne's team made was that there is almost no correlation between a dog's breed and the mitochondrial DNA sequences it carries. In eight German shepherds the scientists found five distinct sequences; in six golden retrievers they found four. And the same sequences repeatedly showed up in many different, and apparently quite unrelated, breeds. The Mexican hairless, or Xolo, a breed known from historical and archaeological records to have existed more than 2,500 years ago in Aztec Mexico—and which presumably separated from Old World breeds some 12,000 years ago, when the Bering land bridge disappeared—contained representatives of all the major mitochondrial DNA sequences found in dogs throughout the world. (The Xolo sequences also resembled those of Old World wolves much more closely than those of New World wolves.)

The point is, then, that if dogs were indeed domesticated more than 100,000 years ago, as Wayne's data suggest, there wasn't much selective breeding going on for most of those 100,000 years. Rather than diverging into separate lines, the dog gene pool remained a well-mixed soup in a bowl of global dimensions. There was considerable gene flow throughout the population, which would not have been the case had early human beings been trying to direct the breeding of their dogs or to develop special lines with certain selected characteristics. Wayne's study also suggests that for a long time the genetic difference between a dog and a wolf was too small to cause any striking morphological change that would show up in the fossil record.

Even if the step from wolf to dog was a small one, it apparently didn't happen very often. Wayne found that the dog mitochondrial DNA sequences fell into four major groups. If there had been a continual influx of new wolf blood into the dog population (that is, if the dog had been reinvented again

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and again from wild populations at different times), such distinct grouping would not have occurred. Wayne's conclusion is that the earliest dogs "must have been integrated somehow into human society" to keep them genetically isolated from the surrounding population of wild wolves, and also that the domestication of dogs from wild populations must have been "a rare event"—something that happened only a few times in history.

That it happened at a time when "humans were barely human," as Gregory Acland—a veterinarian who works with Aguirre at Cornell's Center for Canine Genetics and Reproduction—puts it, raises an interesting possibility. It suggests that early man may not have sought to domesticate dogs at all. Rather, proto-dog found it in his interest to hang around people, and somehow persuaded them not to throw rocks at him or eat him.

That is a teleological statement, of course; if this scenario is correct, there was no conscious intent on the part of the dogs. But there was arguably little or no conscious intent on the part of the people, either. The wonder and beauty of natural selection is that it is creative; it crafts solutions that for all intents and purposes seem to reflect intelligence—"unthinking" intelligence, as the philosopher Daniel Dennett aptly put it. The evolutionarily correct way to state all this is that human beings, with their campfires and garbage heaps and hunting practices, but above all with their social interactions, represented an ecological niche ripe for exploitation by wolves. Or at least by those wolves that through some chance modification in their genetic makeup were able to exploit that niche and then prospered to pass on those traits to their offspring. Although wolves today are the most widespread wild land mammal in the world—with a range that extends from North America to Europe to Asia, encompassing everything from semi-desert to tundra to subtropical forest—their total population probably numbers no more than 150,000. In the United States there are about 50 million owned dogs and millions more unowned—eloquent evolutionary testimony to the wisdom of mooching off people rather than fighting it out in the wild.

DOGS AND DETERMINISM

WHAT is so exploitable about human society? And how do dogs manage to exploit it? We are, as the animal behaviorist John S. Kennedy called us, "compulsive" anthropomorphizers—always on the lookout for behaviors that mimic, even superficially, human social phenomena such as loyalty, betrayal, reciprocity. These are useful

things to look out for when one is a group-dwelling animal whose survival is threatened less by ravenous wild beasts than by back-stabbing fellow group dwellers. Our cognitive ability to ascribe motives to others is a large part of what makes us human. But it truly is compulsive. Human beings do it so instinctively that they are forever ascribing malignant or benignant motives even to inanimate forces such as the weather, volcanoes, and internal-combustion engines.

Our very cleverness is the start of our undoing when we're up against an evolutionary sharpshooter like the dog. We are primed to seize on what are, in truth, fundamental, programmed behaviors in dogs and read into them extravagant tales of love and fidelity. Often dogs need do no more than be their simple selves to amaze and beguile us.

Take the protectiveness that dog owners almost universally impute to their pets. "Protectiveness" is almost certainly nothing of the kind; it is not a sign of a dog's loyalty to and concern for us but an example of what behaviorists call "facilitated aggression." Rather than protecting us, the dog feels protected by us; he is emboldened to react to any threat that appears on his radar screen. Such behavior is observed regularly in wolves: aggression by a dominant member of the pack toward another wolf will trigger an attack by other members.

Or consider the countless stories about dogs that have "saved" people. In fact dogs have no particular instinct to save people and no particular understanding that that is what they are doing even when they do it. Search-and-rescue dogs are trained by exploiting the instinct to retrieve thrown objects. They are trained to fetch. And they are trained to fetch *one* toy only. Once they master that, they are ready for the next step: A person takes the toy and hides; the dog is encouraged to find—well, his toy. When he finds the "victim," the dog is rewarded by getting his toy. At actual disaster scenes trainers get someone to go and hide with the dog's toy several times a day, so that the dog can score a few successes and not become frustrated.

This takes nothing away from dogs' amazing sense of smell or trainability or utility to humankind in such situations. It does say that what is going on here may be simpler than we are ready to believe. As Gregory Acland points out, "All you're doing is taking a behavior that's there and subverting it." Other "rescuing" behavior in dogs is an even simpler matter. Newfoundlands and other water retrievers will bring anything they can out of the water. Often Newfoundland owners cannot swim with their dogs, because the dogs keep pulling them to shore.

The degree to which seemingly complex behaviors are rigidly and genetically programmed is quite frightening at times—frightening for what it suggests about motivation and free will, at least. Pregnant dogs will often pick up stuffed animals and try to “nurse” them. A cardinal in the wild was once observed feeding goldfish for several weeks; a fish would rise to the surface of the pond and open its mouth, and the cardinal would stuff it full of regurgitated insects. That, of course, is what birds do to feed their young, and apparently all it takes to trigger that behavior is the sight of a gaping mouth.

An early part of Elaine Ostrander’s work in the Dog Genome Project was an attempt to locate genes responsible for such complex canine instincts as herding behavior in border collies and the affinity for water in Newfoundlands. The grandpuppies of crosses between border collies and Newfies showed a rich assortment of the two behaviors, enough to make it clear that they were under genetic control—but also enough to show that perhaps a dozen or more genes were involved, and that to accomplish any sort of mapping of those genes, one would need to start with several hundred dogs.

A former postdoctoral research fellow with Ostrander, Melissa Fleming, has developed an assay that attempts to quantify certain innate breed-specific behavioral differences. Fleming found, for example, that border collies would stare at a moving remote-controlled toy car for the duration of a 120-second test. Newfoundlands, in contrast, not only would fail to stare at the car but would not even react to it unless it ran directly into them.

Other studies have turned up some remarkably narrow and distinctive behavioral lineages that further demonstrate the extent to which canine behavior is genetically determined. Certain strains of Siberian huskies and pointers have developed a strongly inherited shyness or aversion to human beings; when kept under identical conditions in identical kennels, the shy dogs will stay back (or, in the case of the pointers, actually freeze and quiver when people approach), while the normal dogs come up to be petted. Breeders have succeeded in producing lines of bloodhounds that bark or do not bark while trailing a scent; of Dalmatians that do or do not take up the proper “coaching” position, trotting under the front axle of a carriage, very close to the heels of the horses; and even of miniature poodles that do or do not “shake hands.”

There is probably no “deflecting aggression,” or submission, gene, but much of what enables dogs to get away with everything up to and sometimes even including murder in human society is an innate part of wolf social behavior. Dogs are social animals, and so are we. Dog society consists of a strong dominance hierarchy in which submission to and appeasement of higher-ranking animals is necessary to survival. Dominance hierarchies avoid violence for the most part, but the threat of violence is ever present. Thus reading social cues adeptly, down to such details of body language as a flick of the ear or the angle of a tail, is the most basic of canine instincts. “That’s what dogs do for a living,” Gregory Acland says. “They figure

out what’s expected of them in a social situation and do it.”

Even people who are very bad animal trainers can usually make themselves understood to dogs. If you shout at a dog, it cringes. Does this mean the dog feels sorry for peeing on your Oriental rug? The fact is that it doesn’t matter, as far as the dog is concerned, whether he feels sorry or not. The cringe is a successful technique for deflecting aggression. Millions of years of wolf evolution have selected such behaviors because they are socially effective; thousands of years of dog evolution have fine-tuned such behaviors so that they are socially effective on people. Just as we are genetically programmed to seek signs of love and loyalty, dogs are genetically programmed to exploit this foible of ours.

THE PROBLEM WITH BREEDING

SO why are there so many canine misfits around these days? If dogs domesticated themselves, if they have evolved their way into a cozy place in human society by instinctively ingratiating themselves, if they have learned behaviors that elicit a friendly response and play on our pre-programmed sympathies, then why are the veterinary journals full of case reports like this one?

An 18-month-old male Irish Setter was owned by a young childless couple. The husband was often threatened by the dog and had been bitten several times. The dog would growl whenever the husband entered the room. This usually occurred if the wife and the dog were in the room before the husband entered. The dog would willingly go for walks with the husband, but only the wife could be in the kitchen when the dog was eating. The dog was most likely to attack the man when he tried to enter his bedroom if the wife was already there.

It is impossible to say for sure if such problems are getting worse, though there is no doubt that aggression in dogs is a widespread phenomenon. In Baltimore, a city of 80,000 to 100,000 dogs, there were 7,000 attacks on people in one year, according to a classic 1973 study. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year in the United States 800,000 people are injured seriously enough by dogs to require medical attention, 6,000 are hospitalized by dog attacks, and about fifteen, mostly children, are killed.

Aggression is of course part of the dog psyche; young dogs, particularly males, do frequently test the dominance status of higher-ranking males. Some other specific behavioral problems reflect innate propensities that have simply become incompatible with modern urban life. For example, traditional sled-dog breeds show up disproportionately among dogs that experience what the veterinary behaviorist Katherine Houpt, of Cornell, terms “barrier frustration”: they like to run and don’t like being kept in a confined space—and respond by chewing or other destructive behavior.

And of course some dog behavioral problems are owner

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problems. Because dogs are so good at picking up on social signals, our psychological failings readily affect the way our pets act. A survey of cocker-spaniel owners in Britain found that less-assertive owners had more-aggressive dogs. There has been a distinct upsurge in the “yuppie-puppy syndrome,” as young working couples buy dogs and leave them alone at home all day to ruin the house—and then spoil them out of guilt for neglecting them. There is also a marked tendency, noted by dog breeders and veterinarians alike, for expectations and realities to clash, because members of an increasingly urban society do not always know what they are getting themselves into when they bring a high-energy herding or hunting dog into their lives.

But there are several reasons to think that canine aggression and other behavioral problems as they exist today are not a “normal” part of the evolved relationship. Nor are they merely the result of individual owners’ personality traits. Over the course of 100,000 years there should have been a considerable amount of selection (even if it was largely unwitting) against aggressive dogs. And most people who seek help for behavioral problems with their dogs, Houpt says, have “done all the right things.” Feral dogs, significantly, are not very aggressive. Studies of urban dogs found that strays were only a third as likely as owned dogs to exhibit aggression toward people when approached. Most wolves are not really aggressive either. There is only one “alpha,” or dominant, male in a pack. Most wolves, and most dogs, are not alpha in the natural scheme of things.

Many people explain the persistence of canine aggression by pointing to deliberate efforts within certain human subcultures to breed aggressive dogs as status symbols or for protection. But even this cannot completely explain what is going on. Notoriously aggressive breeds like Dobermans and German shepherds do show up on lists of problem dogs; but according to Houpt’s research, so do springer spaniels and cocker spaniels—and aggression among these, which hardly rank as notoriously aggressive breeds, may be a phenomenon of the past several decades. Among owners of springer spaniels the phenomenon is widely recognized; they call it “springer rage,” only slightly tongue-in-cheek. According to a survey by Houpt, 27 percent of springer spaniels had bitten a person—at least twice the average rate for dogs.

Such streaks of aggression may seem odd, and they are odd. They seem to be traceable quite directly to the way dogs

have been bred for the past century. By now nearly everyone has heard about the evils of inbreeding in dogs, and hip dysplasia and other hereditary diseases are forever being cited by animal-rights activists in their campaigns against pet ownership in general and dog breeders in particular. Such defects are often presented as the inevitable consequence of any attempt by humankind to manipulate or direct the evolution of a species toward characteristics it happens to fancy.

But genetic markers imply that up until a century or so ago people did successfully develop many highly distinctive varieties of dogs—everything from lap dogs to attack dogs, bird dogs to sled dogs—without a loss of overall genetic diversity, and without a rise in physical or behavioral abnormalities. The evidence also suggests that the problems that have arisen are less a direct consequence of deliberate breeding practice—as is usually alleged—than a largely avoidable side effect of it.

Historically, dogs were mostly categorized by general type. There were sheep dogs, foxhounds, spaniels, pointers, retrievers. But pointers were just pointers—they weren’t German short-haired pointers or Vizslas or Weimaraners. As Wayne’s genetic data show, interbreeding and a flow of genes on a worldwide scale was continuing even as this segregation into types was taking place. The types were distinct in both physical appearance and behavior; they clearly had been selected with specific human aims in mind. But the crucial point is that these dogs were defined by form and function rather than by parentage. They were what livestock breeders would today call “open” or “grade” breeds.

Beginning around 1870, however, with the establishment of kennel clubs in Britain and the United States, closed breeding books were introduced in the name of developing and maintaining “purebred” animals. A dog could be registered as a Vizsla only if both of its parents were registered as Vizslas. There was more than a little racist thinking behind all of this; writings about animal breeding from the late 1800s and early 1900s are full of exhortations to eliminate “weaklings” and to invigorate the race by maintaining the “purity” of its “blood lines.” Look up any bibliography of dog books and the name Leon Fradley Whitney is sure to appear. Whitney was the author of many standard works, including *The Complete Book of Dog Care* (still in print), *This Is the Cocker Spaniel*, *Bloodhounds and How to Train Them*, and *How to Breed Dogs*.



What you won't find in a dog bibliography is some other Whitney works, including *The Case for Sterilization*, a paean to eugenics published in 1934. It was such a definitive treatment that the author received a letter of appreciation from no less an authority on the subject than Adolf Hitler. (Whitney in turn publicly hailed Hitler's "great statesmanship" in ordering the sterilization of the feeble-minded and the insane. In an unpublished autobiography written four decades later Whitney still defended his stance, maintaining that "no ruler ever before had had the courage or the knowledge to put sterilization to work." He allowed, however, that in the 1930s he had not been aware "what a vile human being" Hitler was.)

Today, when an unscientific embrace of "biodiversity" is almost as common as the unscientific embrace of "racial purity" was a century ago, inbreeding is often portrayed as an unmitigated evil. But that is almost as much an oversimplification as the uncritical embrace of purity for purity's sake was. In-

APPLE

I woke and remembered
nothing of what I was dreaming.

The day grew light, then dark again—
In all its rich hours, what happened?

A few weeds pulled, a few cold flowers
carried inside for the vase.
A little reading. A little tidying and sweeping.

I had vowed to do nothing I did not wish
to do that day, and kept my promise.

Once, a certain hope came close
and then departed. Passed by me in its familiar
shawl, scented with iodine woodsmoke.

I did not speak to it, nor it to me.
Yet still the habit of warmth traveled
between us, like an apple shared by old friends.

One takes a bite, then the other.
They do this until it is gone.

—JANE HIRSHFIELD

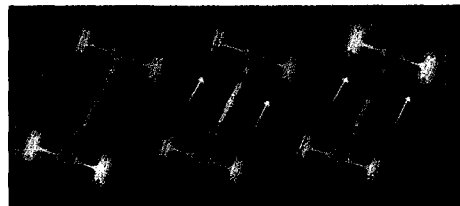
breeding has in fact been a vital technique in the development of virtually every strain of plant and animal useful to agriculture, and it is the only way to rapidly develop a line that will consistently produce certain desirable characteristics. This is at heart a consequence of the biological fact that chromosomes come in pairs; one is inherited from each parent. Closely related individuals—brothers and sisters, parents and offspring—are more likely to carry the same genes. So a mating between two closely related individuals increases the likelihood that the offspring will wind up with the same gene for a given trait on both chromosomes—a state called homozygosity. An organism that is heterozygous for a given trait—that is, has different versions of the gene on each chromosome—may look the same as one that is homozygous, but it will not pass that trait to its offspring as consistently. In the classic human example, both a homozygous individual and a heterozygous one can have brown eyes, though the latter has one gene for brown eyes and one for blue eyes. Brown is "dominant" in this case. But the "recessive" (blue) genes carried by two heterozygous individuals may combine in reproduction to produce offspring who are homozygous for the recessive trait and who will thus be different in appearance—a person with two blue genes has blue eyes. With a homozygous mating, though, what you see is what you get. No matter which of each parent's pair of chromosomes gets passed on to the offspring, the result is the same. In other words, homozygotes breed "true to type" for the traits they have been selected for.

But since closely related individuals have a lot of other genes in common too, inbreeding also increases the chances that any genes for undesirable recessive traits carried at other sites on the genome will combine to produce trouble. Inbred faults in domestic animals tend to be recessive because genetic diseases caused by dominant traits are quickly weeded out in a breeding program: eliminate from the breeding population all the animals that manifest such a disease, and you eliminate the genes for that disease from the entire breeding population. (It takes but a single dominant gene to cause a dominant disease, so there are no "silent" carriers of such genes.) But genetic diseases that show up only in an animal homozygous for a recessive trait can be carried silently for generations. Only when two carriers happen to mate will the disease appear.

Genetic data confirm that the past century of dog breeding has produced some extremely inbred animals. Surveys using gene markers show that the chance that two members of a typical human family will have a different combination of genes at a given site is about 71 percent. In crossbred dogs it is 57 percent, in most purebred dogs 22 percent, and in some rare breeds four percent. Even crossbred dogs are more inbred than the most inbred human populations (the Amish, for example, or families in India in which uncle-niece marriages take place).

This degree of uniformity means that when a bad trait does get locked in by chance, it tends to stay as long as breeding is confined within the group. And a raft of genetic diseases

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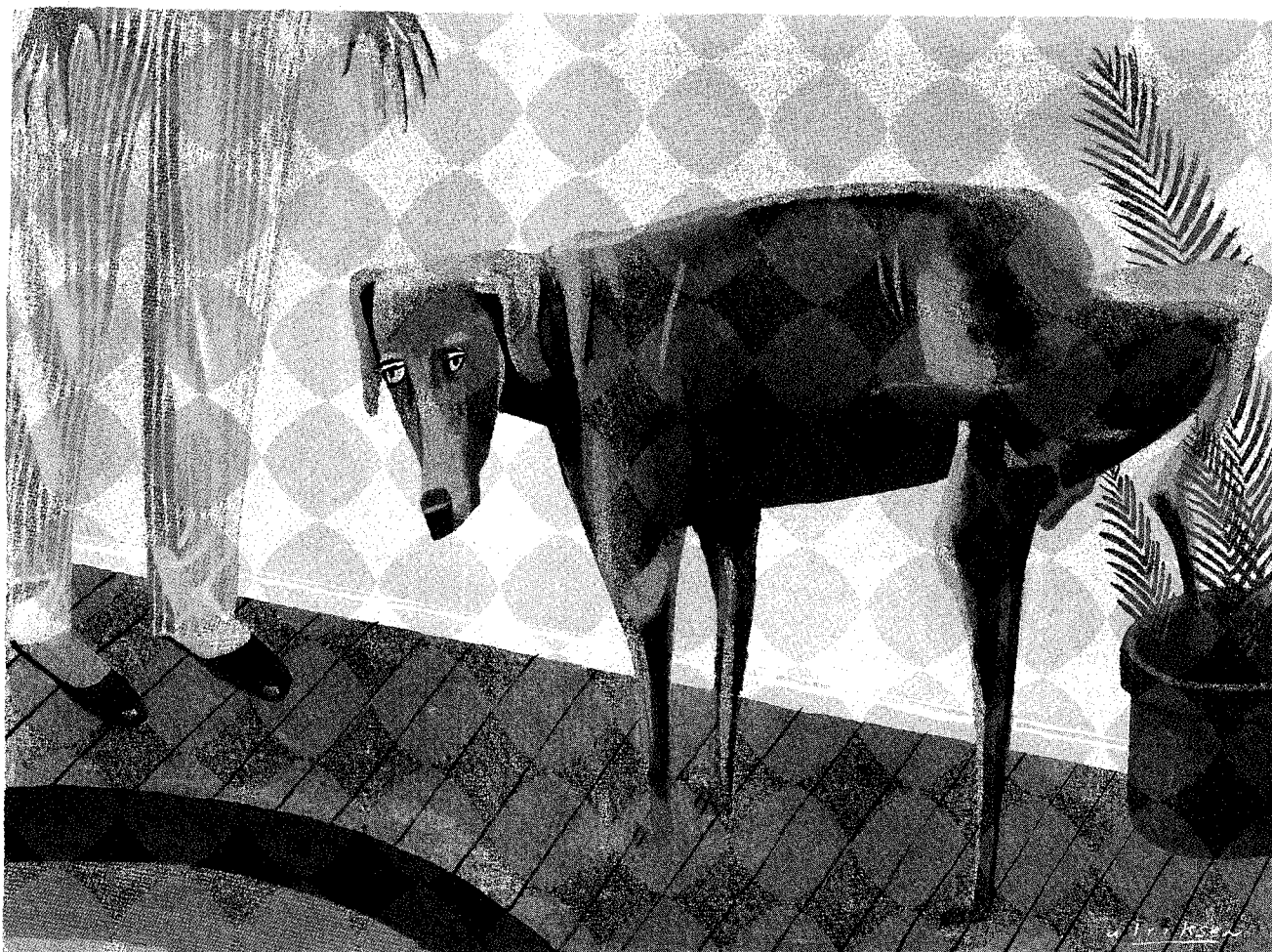


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have been turning up in a variety of dog breeds. Some of them are truly bizarre: epilepsy in poodles, sudden muscle rigidity in Scottish terriers ("Scottie cramp"), chronic fever in Shar-Peis, tumors in flat-coated retrievers, congestive heart failure in boxers.

The dog-show world—the American Kennel Club in particular—is often blamed for having created these genetic diseases through an obsessive preoccupation with physical appearance in breed definitions. But that criticism misses most of the point. Selecting for one thing (such as looks) doesn't mean you can't also select for other things (such as herding behavior and good health) at the same time. Breeders can narrowly select for traits that suit their fancy and still not unlock recessive diseases or lose desirable behaviors—if they start from a large founding population and make sure that they keep a broad representation of the founders' gene pool in all subsequent generations. Working foxhounds are intensely scrutinized for body conformation at competitions; they are also meticulously selected for their ability to follow a fox's trail and to work together as a pack, and their readiness to speak when they find scent. Border collies are selected for herding ability; they almost all happen to have white collars and white tips on their tails as well.

The real source of genetic trouble in many breeds is not so

much that dogs are being bred for looks or to meet other narrow criteria as that the breed has relatively few founders. Many breeds suffer from the "popular sire effect" as well, and here criticism of the breeding world is more justifiable. A stud dog that wins a blue ribbon at a major show may father hundreds of litters, swamping the gene pool with his virtues—and defects—and crowding out some other ancestral lines altogether. The problem is worse in breeds that have gone through a genetic bottleneck. A number of breeds that exhibit strange recessive ailments, including Irish wolfhounds, flat-coated retrievers, Portuguese water dogs, and Shar-Peis, almost disappeared at some point during this century and were reconstituted from very small populations.

Streaks of aggressiveness in a breed like the springer spaniel could likewise be the result of recessive traits being inadvertently locked in to a closed population with a relatively small founder base. But selection may play a role too, and this is another instance in which the show ring may be to blame. Dogs that carry their heads and tails erect catch the attention of judges, and thus tend to win shows. Those are also the marks of a dominant, hence aggressive, dog. Some show-dog breeders don't actually live with their dogs (the dogs stay in kennels), and so are willing to put up with bad traits in a single-minded pursuit of the perfect coat or the half-pricked ear.

FIXING THE DAMAGE

ONE strikingly counterintuitive conclusion of modern genetic studies is that the worst way to correct these mistakes of the past is to weed the carriers of genetic diseases out of the breeding population. The central fallacy of the racist view of eugenics was embodied in the claim that purity is genetically invigorating. In fact just the opposite is true—genetic diversity is invigorating (thus “hybrid vigor,” well known to agricultural breeders), because it helps to ensure that breeding for homozygosity in desirable traits doesn’t at the same time breed for homozygosity in undesirable traits at other sites on the genome. Even disease carriers have a valuable contribution to make in preserving heterozygosity: a dog that carries an epilepsy gene, for example, could also very well carry a gene that protects against cancer. That is a point that Deborah Lynch, of the AKC Canine Health Foundation (which spends about \$1 million annually on academic research into canine diseases, about half of that in genetics), emphasizes.

The key is not to cull the carriers (that is, animals that possess just one defective gene and so don’t exhibit the ailment) but, rather, never to breed two carriers. “The first thing a novice breeder will do is say, ‘Oh, my gosh, there’s a problem in my line, I’m going to get rid of everything and start over,’” Lynch says. “Well, all you’re doing with that is starting over with someone else’s problems.” The solution is to keep parentage as diverse as possible while correcting the problem—and correcting it will become easier and easier as more genetic probes for specific canine ailments are developed.

Clearly, dog breeders are becoming far more sophisticated in their understanding of genetics and more forthright in facing up to inbred problems that just a few years ago they tended to disregard. But old habits die hard, and amid the eclat of new genetic research one can occasionally make out strains of Leon F. Whitney’s old tune. A number of breeders are seeking genetic probes not to detect disease but rather to measure “genetic purity”—to test, for example, if a Vizsla really is a Vizsla, or if (horrors) tainted blood has crept in. But breeding for the purity of the breed is like hiring a storyteller not on the basis of how well he tells stories but after looking at how many generations of Irishmen he has in his background. The fact is that any genetic markers that happen to be associated with a given breed are just a matter of chance. Yes, it is possible, owing to the high degree of inbreeding in dogs, to find some (usually junk) DNA that is unique to one breed. But that is a matter of genetic chance, not genetic necessity, and a breeder

who set out to foil the system could easily do so. A dog might be bred deliberately to pass the Vizsla genetic-purity test while looking like a cross between a Pekingese and a coyote. A more sensible strategy would be to breed dogs for chosen characteristics and for the maintenance of genetic diversity. From a scientific point of view, it is perfectly possible to do this while satisfying the desires of dog breeders to maintain distinctive breeds. Zoo keepers go to great lengths to ensure that subsequent generations of the rare species in their care—considered as a worldwide population—will reflect the total range of existing genetic diversity within the species. Zoos are continually swapping breeding animals or frozen semen.

Individual dog breeders do not have the same incentive to act in concert; the short-term rewards still go to those who can offer puppies that were sired by a champion dog. In the long run, however, the increased availability of genetic tests will make it obvious which breeders have sacrificed good genes in their quest for puppies with flashy pedigrees. Already there are genetic probes available to detect carriers of cystinuria in Newfoundland dogs; Von Willebrand’s disease, a bleeding disorder, in poodles and Manchester terriers; and copper toxicosis in Bedlington terriers. Many breed clubs are requiring, or providing strong incentives for, the use of such tests as they become available.

The sheer diversity of dog breeds, and the fact that up until a hundred years ago—a blink of an eye in terms of evolutionary time scales—genes flowed freely throughout the global dog population, together imply that we still have ample genetic reserves that can be drawn on to undo any damage recently done. Taken as a whole, the genetic diversity of the dog remains as great as that of its wild ancestors.

We can take some reassurance, too, from the fact that mutts, owned and unowned, will always be with us. Despite the efforts of neo-eugenicists to ostracize them, mutts constitute a vibrant reservoir of canine genetic diversity. Mutts tend to be healthy dogs, because of hybrid vigor. They also tend to be good dogs. And in a very real sense mutts today embody the evolutionary heritage of the True Dog—that animal that evolved with us, that adapted to and exploited our society, and did so largely on his own terms. Defiant of human fashion and whim, selected only in accordance with the ancient evolutionary dictate that demands nothing more than an ability to get along with rather gullible human beings, mutts are really what dogs are about. If worst comes to worst, perhaps they will set us straight, just as their ancestors so ably did—at least for 99,900 of the past 100,000 years. ☘

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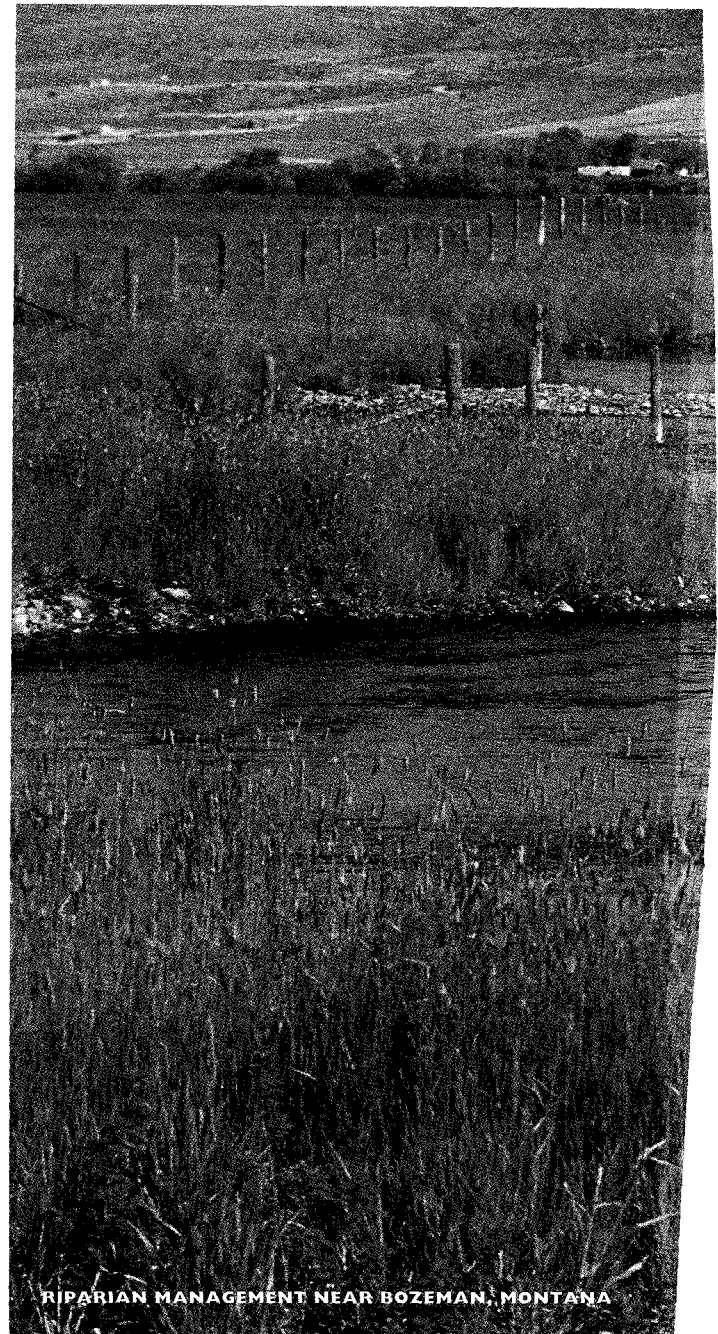
Winning the War for the West

by PERRI KNIZE

*After fiercely battling each other
over the best use of public lands, some
ranchers and environmentalists are
beginning to agree: letting
livestock graze can benefit the
environment*

IN June of last year, while ranchers in Natrona County, Wyoming, waited out three days of rain to finish branding their calves, vandals calling themselves "Islamic Jihad Ecoterrorists" cut the barbed-wire fences separating Bureau of Land Management public range from private land, allowing the unbranded cattle of seven neighbors to mix. More than 150 cuts were made, resulting in about \$100,000 in damage. At least two perpetrators left notes under rocks and nailed to posts on county roads reading, "No more welfare for cowboys" and "Just in time for the welfare cowboys' convention."

It was only one of the more extreme offensives in an ongoing regional battle over who owns the West. Ranchers today are up against a world that no longer views cowboys with nostalgia. The epithet "welfare cowboys" has become common in the national media, along with calls for an end to subsidized grazing on public lands. At the forefront of the grazing controversy are environmental groups, from the National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Resources Defense Council to grassroots organizations like the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity and the Oregon Natural Resources Council. The time has come, they say, to make rich and politically powerful "corporate" ranchers—an elite that has dominated the affairs of the West for more than a century—pay the full cost of the

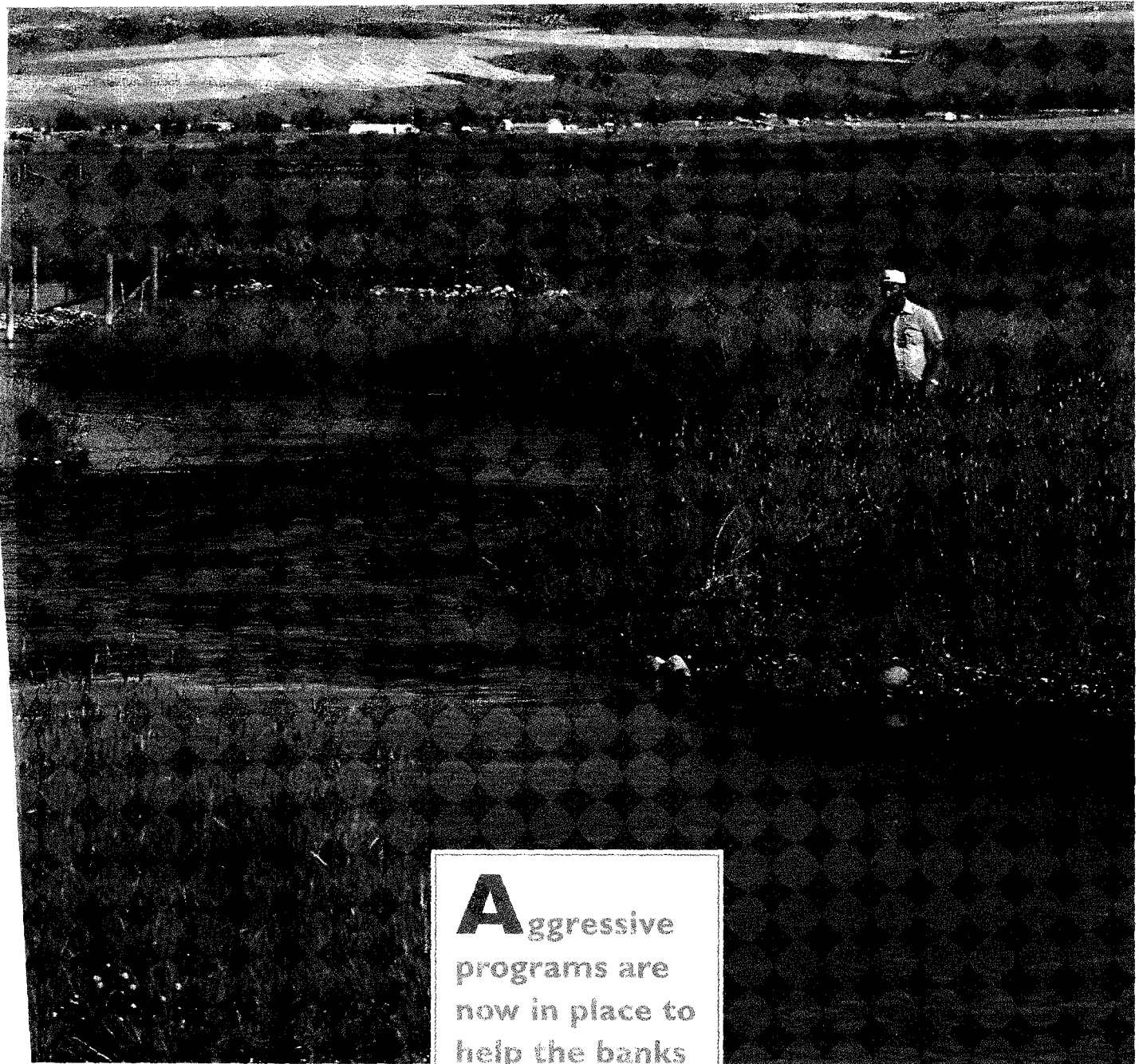


RIPIARIAN MANAGEMENT NEAR BOZEMAN, MONTANA

range program and manage their herds to environmentally correct standards. Better yet, some groups say, run them off the range, and use the land only for wildlife and recreation.

According to critics, domestic livestock that spend some time on the public range—88 percent of western sheep and roughly half of western cattle—are defecating in trout streams, trampling stream banks, and denuding the ground of forage and protective cover needed by wildlife, wreaking havoc on fragile ecosystems. Even worse, the public is paying for this devastation: federal outlays for the management of public grazing lands exceed permit fees from ranchers.

This call to arms is based on half-truths, skewed facts, and outright fallacies. The typical public-lands rancher is not a wealthy cattle baron. Though his ranch may be registered as a family corporation, he is barely making a living. His permit



PICK MOONEY/AG STOCK

Aggressive programs are now in place to help the banks of streams and lakes recover from overgrazing.



fees are not a form of subsidy—he has already paid full market value for the right to graze public lands. Overall the federal range is in better condition than it has been in more than a century. Furthermore, many scientists who study what happens to land where cattle graze admit that no definitive case can be made for or against livestock grazing.

It would be comforting to believe, for the sake of the West's future, that the Islamic Jihad Ecoterrorists terrorized the Wyoming ranchers only because they do not realize how debilitating any extra burden can be for a struggling ranch family. But then, few people in our technological age can comprehend the back-

breaking physical labor during every daylight hour—with no vacations and little financial reward—that a western livestock operation requires.

Even worse for these families, cattle prices are about the lowest they have been in twenty years—and operating costs and land values have skyrocketed as new residents inundate the region. This means that the pickup truck a rancher could buy in the 1950s with the proceeds from selling eight

steers now costs more than forty steers. On average, ranchers make only a two percent return on their operations, and many don't do that well. They would be better off liquidating their assets and putting them in a passbook savings account. Instead

they turn down big offers from real-estate developers, put up with “ecoterrorists,” and hang on by taking temporary jobs in town when the cattle market bottoms out. Ranching, it would seem, is a profession for romantic idealists, not profiteers. Those who hew to it do so for only one reason—they love the land and their way of life.

Caught in the Crossfire

DEAN Welborn, a lifelong cattle rancher, was sixty-three, suffering from bursitis, and looking for a way that his son and daughter-in-law and their four children could continue to ranch without him. Welborn figured he’d have to sell the Lima Peaks outfit in southwest Montana that he has owned for thirty years and buy a smaller, more manageable place. But before he could buy the nearby Briggs ranch, he needed to know if federal managers would let him run enough cattle on the ranch’s attached 25,000-acre grazing allotment on public lands, known as the Muddy Creek allotment, to make the operation pay.

It looked promising. The Bureau of Land Management’s file on the allotment—habitat for elk, mule deer, nesting waterfowl, and a pure strain of West Slope cutthroat trout—reported that it was showing continual improvement from the years when the land had been severely overgrazed by domestic sheep and cattle. BLM managers had recommended the Muddy Creek permit holders for a Stewardship Award in 1989, and had granted a 15 percent increase in cattle numbers for 1990. Welborn bought the ranch in the spring of 1992, believing that the BLM’s glowing review made it safe to assume that stock allocations would remain the same.

But 1992 was a bad year for safe assumptions in the cattle business. Anti-grazing sentiment was running high in the environmental movement and in Washington, D.C.: the cry was “Cattle-free in ’93.” After the election of Bill Clinton the Department of the Interior—parent agency of the BLM—came out in force against grazing. The new Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, proposed a series of “range reforms,” including doubling grazing fees, setting national land-management standards, and changing the agency’s objectives from cattle and grass production to ecosystem health.

In response to these pressures the U.S. Forest Service—the other manager of the federal range—and the BLM set new standards and guidelines for grazing permits. The region where Welborn ranches became a demonstration area for what some characterize as a “cookbook” grazing prescription: throw the cows off the stream banks when animal tracks exceed a certain number, and throw the cows off the grass when stubble height is down to a certain number of inches. The goal was an easily applied standard that would help riparian zones, along the banks of streams and lakes, and uplands, above the stream banks, recover from more than a century of destructive overgrazing.

The Muddy Creek allotment was one of two areas cho-

sen for aggressive implementation of the Beaverhead Riparian Guidelines, named for the Forest Service office that drafted them. After the BLM transferred the allotment to Welborn, managers reduced his allowable herd by 72 percent. This not only left Welborn financially hamstrung (he has since used up his family’s savings trying to keep the ranch afloat) but also ended up threatening the trout fishery it was intended to protect. With his cattle sometimes thrown off Muddy Creek after only three days of grazing, Welborn has no choice but to graze them on his own deeded land—the location, ironically, of most of the prime West Slope cutthroat-trout habitat.

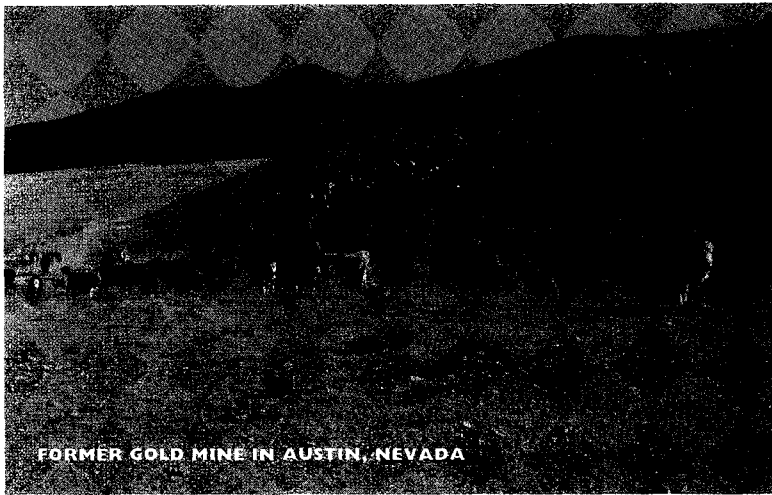
Being forced to degrade fisheries habitat does not sit well with Dean Welborn. He hardly fits the profile of the environmentally rapacious cattle rancher: he and fellow members of the Snowline Grazing Association, a ranching collaborative, have fenced off riparian areas for neotropical birds; pulled noxious weeds so that they don’t go to seed; and put in water troughs to lure cows away from riparian zones. “We’ve gone out of our way to be good stewards of the soil,” he says.

Ecosystems are far more complex and chaotic than anyone fully understands, and the Beaverhead guidelines, critics say, don’t allow for that complexity. With cows moved off his allotment after very short use, Welborn claims, the upland grass is not being grazed enough to attract wildlife. Elk, deer, wild sheep, and antelope prefer the younger, more palatable shoots that are stimulated by the pruning of cattle grazing—a function that bison once provided in the same region. So the wild animals, instead of grazing the uplands, make camp in the riparian areas, where the vegetation is tender and lush. Hundreds of elk pound the stream banks and pollute the water with their droppings, just as cattle do. But the BLM doesn’t manage wildlife.

In 1994 Welborn persuaded the BLM to reconsider the Beaverhead Riparian Guidelines. A new BLM area manager who was sympathetic to Welborn’s predicament and understood the threat to the trout drafted a remedial management plan, but it was quickly appealed by a local environmentalist. After three years of waiting for a hearing in federal court, the BLM finally withdrew the remedial plan and at press time was drafting another allotment-management plan. In the meantime, Welborn has had to abide by the standards and guidelines in the 1993 grazing plan. He says he hopes that the new plan will allow him to run enough cattle to make his ranch viable while enhancing the natural-resource value of the land. Otherwise, he says, he will have to put his ranch up for sale, and the grazing restrictions will oblige any new owner to subdivide it.

The Ranching “Subsidy”

IN fiscal year 1998 the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service together spent at least \$75 million on the federal grazing program, and took in only about \$20 million in grazing fees. This deficit does not mean, however, that ranchers underpay. Setting aside for the moment the



FORMER GOLD MINE IN AUSTIN, NEVADA

questions of whether ranchers should bear the full cost of the range program and whether taxpayers benefit from it, the fact is that 90 percent of ranchers with grazing allotments have paid full value for their leases, though the money didn't go to the federal government.

The value of a ranch is based on the number of cows it can support, so a grazing allotment attached to a ranch adds significant value to the deeded land. The buyer of a ranch has no choice but to pay for this added market value. Although courts have ruled that grazing permits are not private commodities to be traded, federal agencies customarily transfer them to the buyers of private land to which they are attached. Banks recognize them as a commodity by financing their purchase, and the government recognizes their private-property value by taxing it.

Only the approximately 10 percent of public-lands ranchers who are still on their families' original homesteads are receiving a subsidy, in that they did not have to pay for their ranches or their allotments. These subsidies were legislated because grazing on the public range was a necessity if the West was to be settled. The Homestead Act granted pioneers only 160 acres in country where that much land might support just one or two cows; the land's aridity and ruggedness make it useless for most other

The capacity of cattle to revegetate has proved useful for reclaiming mining sites that resisted other methods.



forms of agriculture. Both the allotments and the homesteads were given as incentives to build communities in the West, and fees were set low to encourage private investment to improve these public lands.

Such incentives are of course obsolete today, when the West is growing faster than any other part of the country. But when all the costs of private and public forage are compared, it becomes clear that in many cases ranchers pay more for public range than they do for private. On average, according to some economic studies, it is a wash.

Even so, many ranchers say they would pay more for their permits before they would give up ranching—if their banks would let them. They've invested



money and sometimes the effort of generations in their allotments, and consider these to be part of their ranches. Ranchers say they will pay more if need be even though they are subsidized far less than the average citizen: agricultural landowners get back only twenty-one cents' worth of local public services for every tax dollar they spend, whereas people living in low-density residential areas get a return of \$1.36, according to a 1990 study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

When confronted with these facts, many of ranching's harshest critics say that their central concern is not federal spending but the impact of grazing on biodiversity. In their view, all grazing is environmentally destructive, and it is impossible to manage livestock responsibly on the West's fragile, arid public lands. George Wuerthner, an ardent and well-known anti-grazing activist, claims, "Livestock grazing is the single most ecologically damaging activity we engage in."

Yet it is the rancher who monitors land and wildlife conditions that would otherwise be neglected by short-staffed agencies. It is the rancher who enters into agreements with state fish-and-game departments to allow the public to hunt and fish on his ranch, because that is where most of the wildlife is. And

it is the rancher who through the winter feeds much of the wildlife the public enjoys watching.

Both ranchers and wildlife would suffer if cattle were entirely removed from the public range. BLM and Forest Service lands together support about four million cattle. If those cattle had to be sold quickly because there was no place to put them, prices would plunge, and the cost of private forage in the West would rise by about 10 percent, destabilizing even ranchers not dependent on grazing allotments. Those public-lands ranchers who did survive would have to graze their private land intensively, regardless of the impact on wildlife. After failed ranches had been sold and divided up into suburban-style lots with tract houses, dogs, fences, and noxious weeds, it would be difficult at best for wildlife to find what was left of their winter range. When ranchers are forced to sell, we lose precisely what environmentalists say they are fighting for—wildlife habitat.

What Is a "Natural" Landscape?

IN 1990 the Bureau of Land Management reported that the public range was in the best condition yet this century, and improving. The Forest Service has said the same thing. But a report issued by the Natural Resources Defense Council and the National Wildlife Federation at about the same time declared that the condition of the public range was "unsatisfactory."

Both views may be correct, and both may be wrong. According to the National Research Council, a division of the National Academy of Sciences, we have no consistent field data that can be used to test theories or make general statements about the health of grasslands. The agencies' and the environmental groups' reports used the same data, according to a follow-up study by the General Accounting Office. The GAO, for its part, found that 29 percent of BLM rangelands are in excellent to good condition, 43 percent are in fair to poor condition, and 28 percent have not yet been classified. The BLM points out that it does not define these terms as we might in common parlance: "fair" or "poor" conditions might include high-quality forage, cover for wildlife, watershed protection, and an aesthetically pleasing landscape—but not conditions that fulfill some management objectives, such as the presence of plants like those found by the first settlers.

What almost everyone does agree on is that from about 1880 to 1930 livestock grazing did terrible harm to the public range, and the range is slow to recover. But conditions have vastly improved since the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act, in 1934, which for the first time restricted grazing and imposed fees on what are now BLM lands. The number of western livestock sank drastically, from 28.6 million in 1934 to 10.3 million in 1994. Additional protective legislation was passed in the 1970s. And grazing management has improved. Rangeland acreage rated good or excellent has more than dou-

bled since the 1930s, according to the BLM, and acreage rated poor has been halved. Wildlife populations have been rebounding; more wildlife is on these lands today than at any other time in this century.

Although it is generally acknowledged that riparian zones are still suffering, until a decade or two ago no one understood their importance, and riparian recovery efforts are just beginning. Aggressive restoration programs are now in place, using methods such as installing water tanks to divert cattle from streams, selective exclosure fencing to keep cattle off stream banks, and rotational grazing systems that change the timing and the duration of grazing. The GAO has found these efforts to be very successful, calling the improvements "dramatic." When we see degraded rangeland today, for the most part we are seeing the sins of ranchers' grandfathers and great-grandfathers. Today's progressive ranchers have no plans to return to those methods; they have found that ecosystem management is ultimately more economical, producing healthier cattle and better forage.

Yet environmentalists would have us believe that cattle grazing is an ecological evil on a par with clear-cut logging and open-pit mining. There is no justification for this claim. Modern livestock grazing has comparatively little environmental impact. Nevertheless, many environmentalists simply want all ranchers off the public lands. Some two dozen U.S. environmental groups have signed on to the Wildlands Project, a plan to create a reserve stretching from Central America to the Arctic Circle, in order to protect biodiversity. Dave Foreman, a founder of Earth First! and now chairman of the Wildlands Project, describes it as a vision of "extensive areas of native vegetation . . . off-limits to human exploitation. Vast landscapes without roads, dams, motorized vehicles, powerlines, overflights, or other artifacts of civilization."

The appeal for many is the idea of restoring the West to its natural condition. But what is "natural"? Researchers call it an unscientific and unrealistic standard. We do not know what "natural" looks like, and even if we did, it is probably no longer achievable, in view of the changes that have occurred on the land during the past century, including the introduction of exotic species—especially noxious weeds.

Although it might seem logical to say that because domestic livestock were introduced, they are inherently undesirable, longtime observers of range ecology have discovered otherwise. In recent years wildlife biologists at the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks have returned cattle to wildlife management areas as part of a cooperative arrangement with local ranchers. They have observed that when cattle remove rank vegetation, in the fall, they enhance spring fodder for geese, elk, and antelope. Cattle are also used in these areas as a reseeding tool; they knock the seeds from mature seed heads to the ground and plant them with their trampling. The capacity of cattle to revegetate has proved useful, too, for reclaiming mining sites in Arizona that have resisted reclamation by other means.



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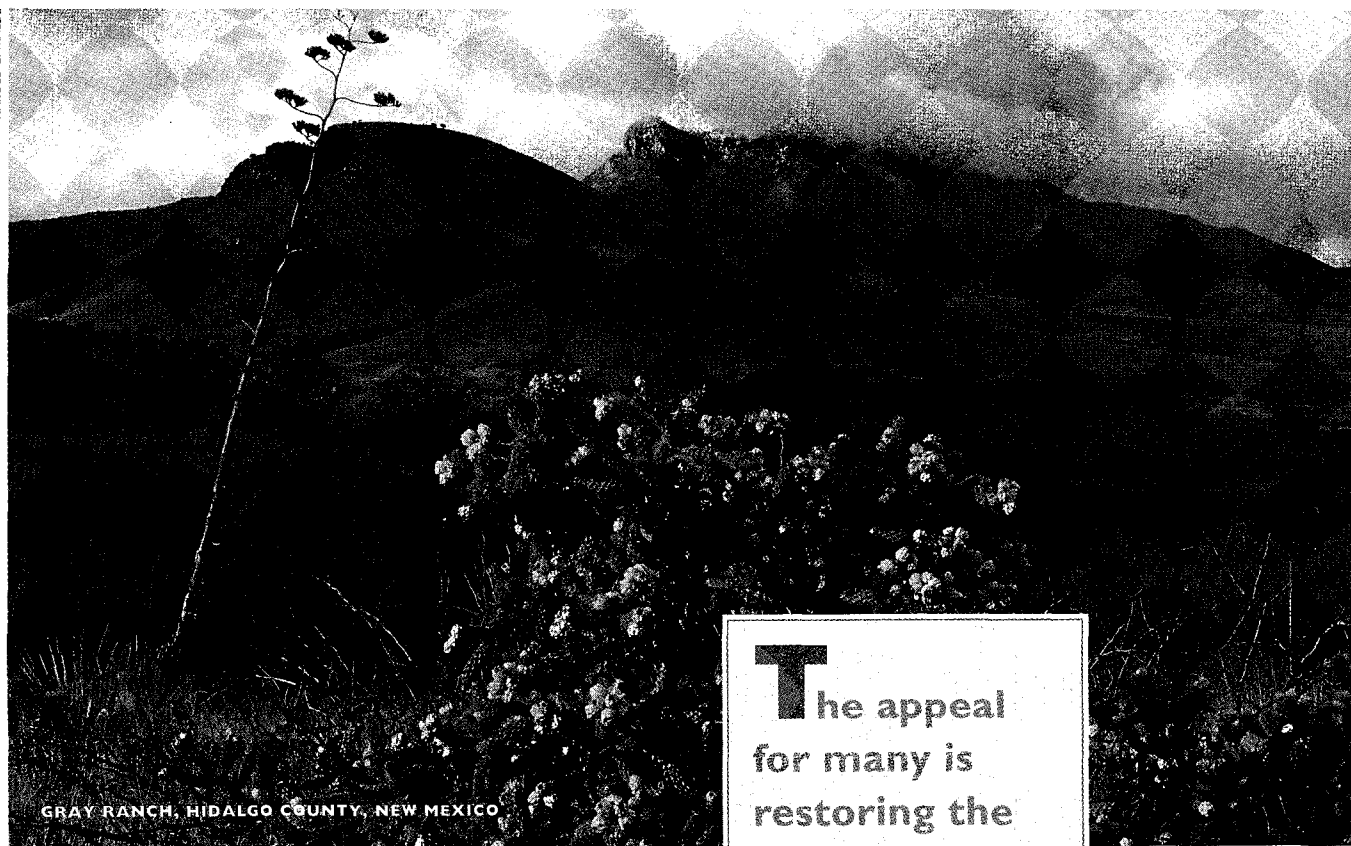
Efforts to remove all cattle from wildlife areas have proved in some instances to be misguided. Managers at the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, in Oregon, are perplexed by a drop in antelope numbers only seven years after livestock were banished from the refuge so that the land could "recover." The managers theorize that the problem is a rising number of coyotes, which prey on antelope fawns. But local ranchers say that the managers have it wrong: numbers are dropping because pronghorn antelope depend on cattle to clear away older grasses and make available younger, more palatable shoots. "Whatever you do to change habitat will benefit some spe-

Who Owns the West?

A FORCE akin to persecution has been gathering momentum. Environmentalists from the desert Southwest to the Great Basin to the Rocky Mountain Front have been mounting a barrage of lawsuits calculated to shut down or cripple commodity uses of public lands and further incapacitate land-management agencies that are already suffering from congressional budget cuts and layoffs.

In 1994 the National Wildlife Federation sued the Forest Service for not complying with the Beaverhead Ripar-

HAROLD E. WALDE



GRAY RANCH, HIDALGO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

cies and negatively impact others," Jack Ward Thomas, a wildlife biologist and a former chief of the U.S. Forest Service, says. "It's not as simple as getting the cows on or off."

It is likely that ungrazed grasslands will burn far more frequently than grazed ones; if cows are removed, wildlife populations will change, as palatable forage for elk, antelope, and deer decreases and annual plants and the animal species that prefer them also decline. There will be fewer rodents, which will mean less food for raptors, coyotes, and other predators.

"The question is, How do you make changes that will improve range conditions in a reasonable time frame and also not negatively affect people's ability to make a living?" says Donald J. Bedunah, a plant ecophysiolgologist at the University of Montana. "I don't believe rapid change is necessary. We don't have to persecute ranchers to accomplish what is needed."

The appeal for many is restoring the West to its natural condition. But what does "natural" mean?



ian Guidelines and demanded that all grazing allotments not in compliance be suspended. The same group later scored a court victory in Utah that forced the BLM to remove all cows from the canyons of the Comb Wash grazing allotment. The Oregon Natural Desert

Association sued the BLM for violations of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, ultimately seeking a permanent ban on grazing. Gila Watch, a local watchdog group, appealed the 230-square-mile Diamond Bar allotment, in southern New

Mexico. In Idaho a campaign by activists forced the Forest Service to remove two thirds of the cattle grazed on the Stanley Basin allotment, in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. And in the Southwest a zealous assortment of biologists, land planners, and other activists, known as the Southwest Center for Biological Diversity, has created a legal "train wreck" with more than a hundred lawsuits against federal agencies, hindering range and timber management until forest plans are amended.

It's no accident that these clashes are escalating at a time of new westward migration. The population of the West has increased by 14 percent since 1990, and the nation's five fastest-growing states are in the West—Nevada, Arizona, Idaho, Utah, and Colorado. These are also among the states where ranchers are the most dependent on public-lands grazing. Since 1982 urban growth in the West has consumed more than two million acres of land. In Montana alone, where the land rush is slower than in other western states, about three million acres of agricultural land have been subdivided since 1985.

Rarely do New West migrants blend seamlessly into Old West culture. KEEP OUT signs now bar country lanes that once were open to the community. Drugs and gangs are overtaking some small-town secondary schools. Traffic jams and road rage are becoming more common than tractors on the highways. Off-road, mountain bikes roam the range. For good or ill, the last remnants of the Old West are dying.

What we lose with the cowboy is far more than some antiquated and romantic notion of the West. When we lose the family ranch, we lose much that we need as human beings, and much of what brought migrants like me to the inland West in the first place: a daily, personal relationship with nature; a social contract that works; a sense of connection with others; a sense of fully inhabiting a place for the long haul. Ranching communities are ruled by ethics that knit neighbors tightly and securely together—the antithesis of the alienated urban culture in which 75 percent of Americans now live.

If ranches are to work as businesses and as a way of life, says Aaron Harp, a rural sociologist at the University of Idaho, ranchers need to rely on social relations established over years, even generations—such as buying feed from the same local retailer their grandfathers bought feed from, even though it might be cheaper to send to Billings. Newcomers want a small-town feeling, but they don't recognize that their insistence on changing how things are done displaces exactly what they say they came for. "You have to interact—pitch in and sandbag the creek when it floods," Harp says. "When the neighbor's cows get into your garden, you have to round them up for him and not complain—then maybe he'll plough out your driveway for you in the winter."

Social issues are never explicitly addressed as a significant component of the grazing debate. Instead it is framed as a controversy over public-land use. When environmentalists and agency managers promote tourism and recreation as alternatives to the prevailing agricultural economy, they don't stop to

ask whether tourism will force established communities to give up their traditional livelihoods, because hikers don't like cow pies. Meanwhile, bankruptcy by bankruptcy, family ranching is vanishing. "It comes down to who will live and who will die," Harp says. "Who gets to stay? What people? What wildlife?"

The irony is that most ranchers share most environmentalists' objectives: clean water, flourishing wildlife, and healthy ecosystems. Unlike the farmer, who must break the soil, the progressive rancher adapts to the land he grazes. His understanding of the ecosystems on his land is built on years of daily observation and interaction. This is an untapped reservoir of knowledge that could be of great value to federal land managers, who rarely have the luxury of getting to know one landscape well. Ranchers want to leave the range in better condition than they found it, and they have made a multi-generational commitment to that ethic. There should be common cause between ranchers and environmentalists, not divisiveness.

Working Together

DAN Dagget is an unlikely defender of the cowboy. While living in southeastern Ohio in the early 1970s as part of a back-to-the-land community, Dagget fought a company that wanted to re-open a major coal strip mine adjacent to his farm. He became a relentless environmental advocate, organizing demonstrations for Earth First! and similar groups. The Sierra Club declared him one of the most effective grassroots activists in America. He entered the range wars when he worked to dismantle a state predator-control program and supported the reintroduction of the endangered Mexican gray wolf. It was as a wolf advocate in Arizona that he first encountered ranchers.

"I was convinced there was nothing for an enviro like me to talk to ranchers about," he says. But more-moderate wolf advocates, concerned that extremists like Dagget would make things so hot with the ranchers that the wolf would never be reintroduced, invited him and five other radical environmentalists to meet with six archconservative ranchers. They were asked to try to find common ground with the help of a facilitator.

The ranchers and the environmentalists found they wanted the same things: a relationship with the land that would sustain them and future generations ecologically, economically, and spiritually—that would, above all, leave a healthy environment as a legacy. The six ranchers took the six environmentalists to visit their grazing allotments and showed them their efforts to restore the ecosystem. To Dagget's amazement, he says, "I saw the ranchers were achieving my goals better than I was."

The "Six-Six Group" began working together to adopt environmental-restoration goals and implement practical solutions. They also began to visit and exchange ideas with simi-

lar coalitions around the Southwest. And Dagget experienced a conversion: as relentlessly as he had once fought ranchers he became vociferous in their defense, promoting cattle grazing as a tool for range rehabilitation. In his book, *Beyond the Rangeland Conflict*, he tells the stories of ten ranches where livestock grazing is compatible with healthy range and wildlife habitat. He says that he chose these ten from many around the West that are meeting environmental goals.

The grazing methods advocated by the Six-Six Group are revitalizing the ecosystem, Dagget claims. Whether it and similar groups will prevail and save the land for both people and wildlife may depend on whether they can win policymakers' attention away from the extremists on both sides of the debate.

These coalitions are beginning to get the recognition they deserve. In June of last year a MacArthur grant was awarded to William McDonald, a rancher and a director of the nonprofit Malpai Borderlands Group, at the juncture of Mexico, New Mexico, and Arizona. The group's mission statement declares a commitment to restoring and maintaining "the natural processes that create and protect a healthy, unfragmented landscape to support a diverse, flourishing community of human, plant, and animal life in our Borderlands Region." The Malpai Group, which is managing a million-acre ecosystem divided almost equally between public and private lands, consists of about twenty ranchers, the Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service, the BLM, and a team of conservation biologists and other scientists from all over the country. So far it has preserved a threatened population of Chiricahua leopard frogs during a drought, by hauling 1,000 gallons of water a week to stock ponds; funded brush removal and native range reseeding programs; and begun to study the character and causes of rangeland vegetation shifts—a source of heated debate about the effects of cattle grazing.

The group is also working to preserve the endangered rancher. One of its innovations is the Grassbank. If a neighbor needs to rest his pasture, because of drought or other environmental concerns, he can graze his herd on a neighboring ranch without paying the usual leasing fees. In return for use of the Grassbank, the rancher places a conservation easement, held by the Malpai Group, on his own ranch, barring subdivision and forfeiting his development rights.

Conservation easements are among the most powerful tools available for saving family ranches and protecting wildlife habitat. State governments, nonprofit agencies, and private coalitions buy the development rights to ecologically valuable private ranchland; the family retains ownership of the land itself, and the right to continue using it in the traditional agricultural way. Such an agreement reduces the land's market value, generates cash for the family, and thereby reduces or pays for estate taxes when the time comes to pass the ranch on to the next generation. Ranchers can stay on the land, wildlife winter range is protected, and the public continues to enjoy undeveloped scenic vistas.

Near the town of Brothers, Oregon, Doc and Connie Hatfield, the owners of the High Desert Ranch, have helped to organize the Trout Creek Mountain Working Group, one of the first and most successful efforts to bring ranchers, environmentalists, and agency managers together to solve rangeland problems. They are marketing hormone- and antibiotic-free beef through a cooperative that includes other area ranchers. The Hatfield ranch is open to the public, to demonstrate how sound ranching practices can improve the environment.

In 1996 Jack Ward Thomas, then the chief of the Forest Service, and Mike Dombeck, then the acting director of the BLM, initiated the National Riparian Service Team. The project sends a team to assist local cooperatives in improving their watersheds. It also offers public demonstrations of good management practices and helps conflict-ridden regions to forge collaborative partnerships and find local solutions to riparian problems.

More and more environmentalists are recognizing the stake that all westerners have in the preservation of private ranchlands—and the inevitable consequences of inflaming the range wars. COWS NOT CONDOS is a bumper sticker seen around Montana's more liberal communities lately. It's the concept behind the Montana Land Reliance, a conservation group that is helping ranchers find tools—such as conservation easements—to save family ranches from subdivision and thereby keep ecosystems intact. The Sonoran Institute, in Tucson, Arizona, is another conservation group dedicated to finding collaborative solutions to the grazing controversy, and the Nature Conservancy is also a major player in ecosystem ranching—from the famous Gray Ranch, in New Mexico's bootheel, to Utah's Canyonlands region, where it recently spent \$4.6 million to save a working ranch from real-estate developers. The Conservancy will continue to run the 5,167 acres of deeded land plus 250,000 acres of public grazing allotments as a model of sustainable ranching. The previous owners of the ranch want to preserve its fragile desert, wildlife, and archaeological sites, including forty-two miles of riparian areas, and will continue to manage it for the Conservancy.

Despite these models of how ranchers and environmentalists can together achieve their goals, some ranchers will go down defending the way they've always done things, and some environmentalists will never veer far from regarding ranchers with an attitude that approaches a form of racism. "I have rancher friends, too," say many environmentalists who nevertheless advocate the wholesale removal of ranches from the range. "But ranchers are obsolete anyway—why waste our time and money on them?"

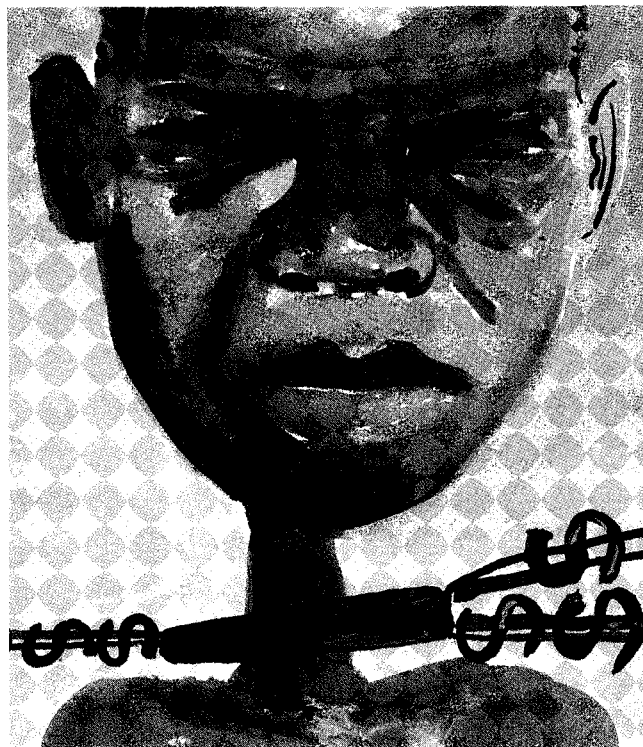
Those ranchers who have survived until now have made it because they are as tough and as adaptable as coyotes. Given half a chance, they will survive the new westward migration as well. The real question is whether the people at either extreme—who want public land used only as they see fit—will get what they wish for. If they do, they may ultimately regret it. ☘

The False Promise of Slave Redemption

by RICHARD MINITER

Some Africans and Westerners say that the battle against slavery in Sudan is being undercut by a humanitarian effort—the practice of buying freedom for the slaves

SUDAN is Africa's largest country and its saddest case. Every ancient scourge lives here: war, famine, disease, pestilence, rape, mutilation, and slavery. Starvation and violence have cost some two million lives and displaced some five million people since 1983, according to Freedom House, a Washington-based human-rights organization. Robert A. Seiple, until last summer the president of World Vision United States, a relief and development group, has asked, "Is there a name for a million square miles of suffering? Yes. It is called Sudan." The United Nations and, indirectly, the United States government have since 1989 airlifted millions of tons of food to starving people in southern Sudan, the epicenter of a civil war. But it is the emergence of modern-day slavery that has



seized the world's attention.

Entering southern Sudan, one sees the names of dozens of international agencies, nonprofit groups, and religious organizations plastered on Land Rovers and compound gates. There is no shortage here of good intentions. But far from the

airstrips and offices, some Africans say that Westerners are a large part of the problem: nearly everything the activists do makes matters worse. And the issues of slavery and starvation are joined in an unexpected and overlooked way that ensures the continued failure of humanitarian efforts. Still, the battle against slavery in Sudan can be won, if international officials have the sense to try a different, more hardheaded approach—one that does not include the much-publicized practice of redeeming slaves for money.

Documenting the Problem

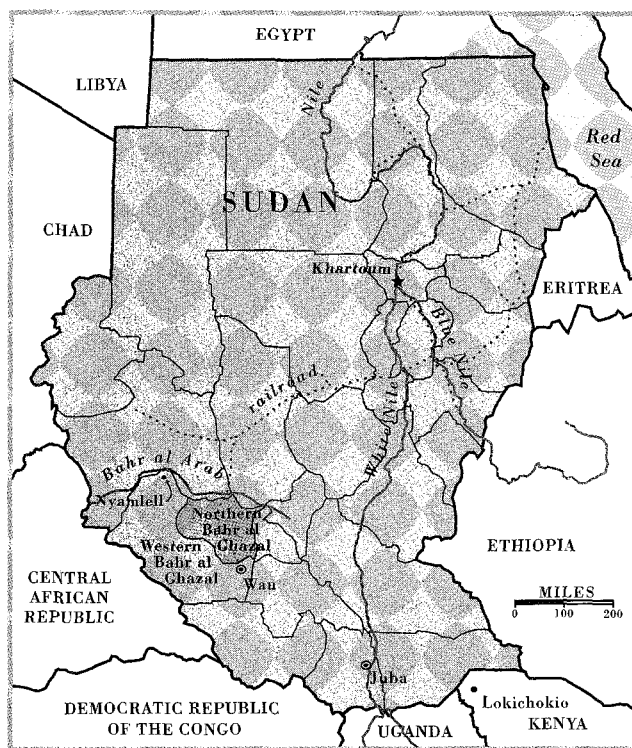
THE evil of slavery, which had been virtually eliminated by the British during the First World War, returned to Sudan in 1989, when the fundamentalist political party known as the National Islamic Front took control of the government in Khartoum and decided to arm Baggara tribesmen so that they could fight the rebellious Christian tribes of the south in Sudan's widening civil war. That war, which has raged intermittently ever since the country gained independence from Britain, in 1956, pits the educated, technologically superior Muslim north against the poor, undeveloped, and populous Christian and animist south. The Baggara are a Muslim people who in the past enslaved their neighbors, the cattle-herding Dinkas. Re-armed, the Baggara resumed the slave raids that the British had ended. They were aided and encouraged by the Khartoum government, which supplied auxiliary troops, known as the Popular Defence Forces, and also provided horses, guns, and ammunition. The government allowed slave markets to open in Khartoum, Juba, Wau, and other cities it controlled. Thousands of Dinkas, mostly women and children, have been seized in raids and taken north on foot or by train, over hundreds of miles of rocky, arid wasteland, to be sold, sometimes for as little as \$15 apiece. Family members are often separated as they are parceled out to different buyers. Their Muslim owners, who do not speak the slaves' language, consider it a traditional right to enslave southerners; their word for a southern tribesman, *abd*, is synonymous with "slave." The slaves have been put to work as cooks, maids, field hands, and concubines. Some teenage males have been forcibly circumcised; a number of females have been ritually mutilated. Many are fed and kept like cattle, often sleeping beside livestock that their owners consider far more valuable. Like cattle, they are branded, sometimes just below the eye, with the Arabic name of their owner.

By the early 1990s reports of slavery's return began trickling out of Bahr al Ghazal, a Dinka region in southern Sudan, to relief and development groups helping Sudanese refugees in Uganda and Kenya. At first the reports were hard to believe, and aid workers accepted the Sudanese government's adamant denials. But new eyewitnesses kept coming forward. If their reports were true, aid workers wondered, how could the situation be brought to the world's attention?

The answer was provided by John Eibner, an official at *Christian Solidarity International*, a group based in Zurich that had been founded in 1977 to fight the persecution of Christians and religious minorities in the Soviet Union and elsewhere. CSI, now also dedicated to assisting victims of war and famine, has played a major role in shaping the response to slavery in Sudan. In May of 1995, defying the Sudanese government, Eibner chartered a plane and flew deep into Sudan's "no go" area. There he met dozens of Dinka mothers who told him about their abducted children. He could no longer doubt that the resurgence of slavery was real.

Upon his return to Switzerland, Eibner persuaded reporters from around the world to make the dangerous and illegal trek into Sudan to document the slave trade. He led journalists from *The Baltimore Sun* and other newspapers to the open-air slave markets. "Witness to Slavery," a series that the *Sun* published in June of 1996, shocked Western officials and human-rights advocates. The Clinton Administration imposed comprehensive trade and economic sanctions on Sudan in 1997. Still, economic leverage was limited: all direct U.S. aid to Sudan had been cut off years earlier, owing to the 1989 coup d'état. In 1993 the United States had added Sudan to the list of countries it believes sponsor terrorism, further reducing the prospects for international aid. Other industrialized nations publicly condemned the Sudanese government's tolerance of slavery. Not surprisingly, world outrage did nothing to diminish it.

How widespread is slavery in Sudan? It must be said that hard numbers of the sort Americans are accustomed to do not



exist. There is no question that scores of raids occur every year, and many thousands of people now live in captivity. There are many accurate local statistics: villages keep fairly complete lists of their people who have been killed or captured. But no reliable national data exist to provide a complete picture of the crisis. The chaos of civil war makes comprehensive data collection difficult, and only sporadically do the village reports reach county governments, or county lists reach the rebel command in Nairobi. In some regions, such as the Nuba Mountains and Darfur, records have been destroyed in the intense fighting or are no longer kept. Steven Wondu, the Washington representative of the rebels' Sudanese People's Liberation Army, offered 20,000 as a very rough esti-

mate of the number of slaves in Sudan. Whatever the precise figure, local reports and the personal experience of Western aid workers and journalists are sufficient to conclude that slavery is a persistent threat.

John Eibner came up with the idea of Westerners' buying back slaves, building on a practice already used by local people. As Eibner relates, "On previous visits we heard about the efforts of local people to get their loved ones out of bondage through a retrieval mechanism that had been established as part of a local Dinka-Arab peace agreement, which was signed in 1991." By the fall of 1995 Christian Solidarity International was in the business of buying slaves in large batches and setting them free. The organization called the process "slave redemption."

Within the past eighteen months raising money for slave redemption has become a focus of well-intentioned activity in many public schools and evangelical churches. In these supposedly apathetic times the plight of Sudanese slaves has inspired countless institutions and community groups across the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. Dozens of non-profit agencies, relief groups, and missionary organizations are raising hundreds of thousands of dollars a year for "freedom funds."

Barbara Vogel's fifth-grade class at the Highline Community School, in Aurora, Colorado, was the first public school class to raise money for slave redemptions. The effort began in February of last year, when Vogel read her students an article from *The Rocky Mountain News* about the plight of Sudanese slaves. "Nothing hit my kids like this did," Vogel told me recently. "They cried. They all agreed we had to do something." By selling lemonade, T-shirts, and old toys, the Aurora students raised more than \$1,000 within the year. Media attention, including a feature on the CBS *Evening News*, brought in donations from across the country, ultimately totaling more than \$50,000. Many other schools have followed Vogel's lead, including the Damascus Middle School, in Oregon, where fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-graders raised \$2,500 on their own.

Christian Solidarity International, which says it has freed almost 8,000 slaves since 1995, is by far the largest of about a dozen groups that buy slaves out of bondage. In what was billed as the largest single slave redemption to date, in January of this year CSI bought 1,050 slaves for the equivalent (in Sudanese pounds) of \$52,500—\$50 each. In April, CSI broke its record, freeing 1,783 slaves. Meanwhile, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, a London-based group headed by Baroness Caroline Cox, redeemed 325 slaves. Cox, a member of the House of Lords, has attracted her own following, including a number of donors in the United States.

James Jacobson, at the time the vice-president of the National Right to Read Foundation, a literacy group based in The Plains, Virginia, became CSI's Washington representative in November of 1995. At first he was a loyal supporter of slave redemption. During the next few years CSI was beset by internal differences that resulted in the breakaway of the British,

Austrian, and American offices, among others. The American operation achieved independence last year, as Christian Freedom International, with James Jacobson at its head. Vowing to pursue the same objectives as CSI, but handicapped by his lack of firsthand experience of Sudan, Jacobson made a trip to the war zone. He traveled to remote villages and met former slaves who were scarred from beatings. "I felt satisfied that slavery was real," he said, "but I began to realize that there was also the potential [in slave redemption] for abuse." As media reports and the number of redemptions by an increasing assortment of groups multiplied rapidly, so did Jacobson's doubts and fears.

Subsequent visits to Sudan gradually revealed what Jacobson regarded as the consequences of good intentions gone awry, and after his most recent visit to Sudan, on which I accompanied him, he has reluctantly turned away from slave redemption as a tactic. Though his organization is still actively involved in Sudan, shipping clothing, tools, and school supplies, Jacobson identifies three problems with current humanitarian efforts there. First, the financial incentives of slave redemption are so powerful in Sudan, one of the world's poorest nations, that they encourage the taking of slaves. Second, even when the incentives don't promote slavery, they can promote hoaxes. Third, the way the United Nations distributes food acts as a magnet for slave raiders.

Encouraging the Slave Trade

THE per capita income in Sudan, according to Sudanese embassy estimates, is about \$500 a year. In the war-torn south it is much less. A small amount of money injected from the outside can create a powerful dynamic. Selling slaves back to their families for \$50 to \$100 each—with the financial assistance of Westerners—is far more profitable than selling them for about \$15 in the northern slave markets. "We've made slavery more profitable than narcotics," Jacobson says. Recently I asked Manase Lomole Waya, who runs Humanitarian Assistance for South Sudan, a group based in Nairobi, what he thought about slave-redemption efforts. "We welcome them for exposing the agony of our people to the

THE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES OF SLAVE REDEMPTION ARE SO POWERFUL THAT THEY ENCOURAGE THE TAKING OF SLAVES. "WE'VE MADE SLAVERY MORE PROFITABLE THAN NARCOTICS," ONE FORMER SLAVE REDEEMER SAYS.

world," he said. "That part is good. But giving the money to the slave traders only encourages the trade. It is wrong and must stop. Where does the money go? It goes to the raiders to buy more guns, raid more villages, put more shillings in their pockets. It is a vicious circle."

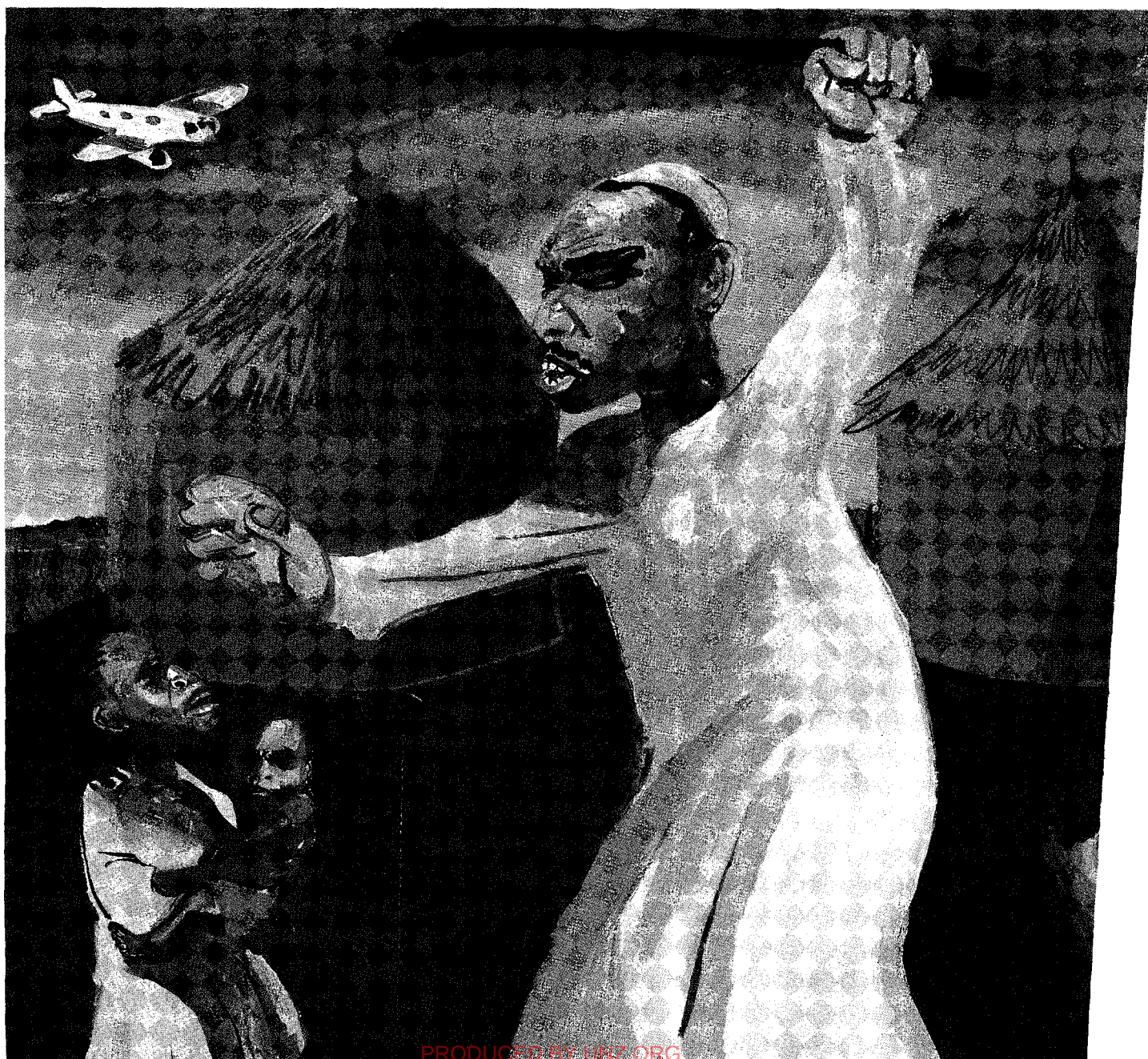
Slave redeemers enrich every element of the trade: raiders, owners, and traders. Once, the main objective of roving militias and Baggara raiders was simply war booty: goats, cattle, and other valuables, with a few slaves taken to make a little extra money on the side. The price of a slave rose to \$300, however, and slaves became the focus of the raids. By the mid-nineties supply had outpaced demand, and prices began to fall—to about \$100 in 1995 and then to \$15 in 1997. Plunging prices threatened to put the traders out of business: paying and arming raiders, and feeding and watering their horses in a dry region, is very expensive.

What seems to have kept the slave business afloat is the high

prices paid by the slave redeemers. Though redemption prices also fell, they stayed far above the \$15 paid in slave markets. CSI, according to its publications, paid the equivalent of about \$100 for each freed slave from 1995 to 1997 and since then has paid about \$50. In effect the redeemers are keeping prices high and creating a powerful incentive for raids.

Some slave-redemption proponents argue that they must pay a risk premium—a sum sufficient to encourage dealers to bring slaves back to the south. CSI suggests that the premium is necessary to cover the costs of food, water, and armed guards to transport the slaves. "Traders incur substantial costs & serious risks for their own security," a CSI report from October of 1997 concludes. Fair enough—but no matter how the price for redeemed slaves is justified, the simple fact is that redemption makes the trade much more lucrative.

Another indication that slave redemption has spurred raids is that the size of a typical raiding party has grown from rough-



ly 400 attackers in 1995 to more than 2,500 this year, according to figures compiled by the Sudanese Relief and Rehabilitation Association, the rebels' civilian arm. Why, in an era of falling prices, did the raiders more than sextuple their overhead? To garner more of the slave redeemers' bounty. It seems certain that without redemption, the raiding parties would have diminished.

A number of Dinka leaders, along with Macram Gassis, one of Sudan's eleven Catholic bishops, strongly support slave redemption, and some seek to make CSI the sole redeemer. However, the Dinkas I spoke with, all of whom live in villages that have been victimized by the raiders, strongly oppose redemption altogether on the grounds that it promotes raids. In February the Akoch Payam settlement was attacked by more than 2,500 horsemen and foot soldiers. Thirty-six people were killed and another seventy were taken away as slaves (along with food and thousands of animals). "Redemption is not the solution," Longar Awic Ayuel, Akoch's executive chief, told me a few days after the raid. "It means that you are encouraging the raiders."

The official spokesman for the Akoch district government, Adelino Rip Goc, emphatically agreed with Ayuel. "It is common sense not to pay the men who kill your father and steal your brother, or they will return," he said. "I don't know why the redeemers do such a thing."

As I spoke with Goc, a crowd of villagers encircled us. Does anyone here support slave redemption? I asked. No one did. One man said that I should talk to Machar Malok Machar. In a previous raid on Akoch, Machar was captured and marched into the desert. Before sunrise on the second day he crawled away and hid. He waited for hours until the Muslim slave raiders departed. Then he walked home, with his hands still tied behind his back, to find his wife and family missing, his hut burned, his cattle and goats gone. After I heard his story, I asked him about slave redemption. "It is bad,"

he said. "They do these terrible things to put shillings in their pockets. They are crazy for the money. Why would you give it to them?"

A number of human-rights organizations concerned with Sudan are also skeptical of slave redemption and its unintended consequences. UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, has called the practice "intolerable," because "the buy-back program implicitly accepts that human beings may be bought and sold," as Paul Lewis, a reporter for *The New York Times*, explains. "This could also encourage slave-taking for profit." Reed Brody, the advocacy director for Human Rights Watch, says that although redemption is understandably welcomed by many abductees and their families, it poses a "real danger of fueling a market in human beings." To date neither organization has issued an official report condemning slave redemption.

Redemption reduces any incentive for owners to set slaves free. Prior to 1995 about 10 percent of slaves, mostly old women and small children, were allowed to escape or even told to go home, because they cost too much to feed; some of the younger female slaves were let go because they made the owners' wives jealous. Though this meant a dangerous and lonely trek across the desert for the manumitted slaves, it helped to keep the size of the slave population in check. Today many northerners consider their slaves an investment. Acutely aware of the redemption money available, they sell their human chattels to middlemen, who take the slaves south.

Redemption also rewards slave traders. Many entrepreneurs who sold a variety of contraband goods prior to 1995 now deal solely in slaves. It is more profitable. As in many businesses, the man in the middle stands to make the most money. Raiders may earn \$5 to \$15 per slave; traders can earn several times as much. The trader, that vital link, is the worst person to enrich. Without him the typical raider has no market for his captives—he can hardly resell them to their families, and he has no personal access to buyers in the north. In contrast, the trader moves easily between the two worlds. Thanks to the redeemers, who treat them as business partners, traders are richer than ever and, indeed, enjoy a measure of legitimacy as the linchpin of the redemption chain. This is not the result that the redeemers intended.

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SAID HE HAD
JUST FOUND TEN
CHILDREN TO BE
REDEEMED. THE
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PULLED ME
ASIDE. ARE THE
CHILDREN SLAVES?
I ASKED. "NO," HE
SAID, "THEY ARE
CHILDREN OF THE
VILLAGE."



Incentives for Hoaxes

THE money available to redeem slaves has attracted the attention of people other than "legitimate" traders. No one can say how widespread slave-redemption hoaxes may be, though even John Eibner concedes the possibility of fraud: "I have at times refused to cooperate with people who have asked CSI to provide money for slave redemption when I have not been convinced that sound ethical standards are being strictly adhered to," he says. Eibner believes that he has adequate safeguards in place, including a determined effort to match the names of retrieved slaves with those on local lists of abductees.

I witnessed an attempted slave redemption that was unquestionably problematic during a recent visit to Nyamlell, a large settlement about fifty miles south of the Bahr al Arab River, in southern Sudan. Nyamlell has been the location of many slave redemptions covered by the U.S. media. The night before my visit officials from the local branch of the Sudanese Relief and Rehabilitation Association in Lokichokio, Kenya, asked for a meeting with James Jacobson, who had been hoping to redeem the slaves in Nyamlell. After half an hour of small talk the officials got down to business. "How much money are you bringing for slave redemption?"

"Four thousand dollars," Jacobson said.

"Ah, that is very helpful. There are forty slave children to be redeemed."

"Forty children? That would be a hundred dollars each. Don't other groups pay fifty dollars each?"

"No. Everyone pays a hundred."

"What about Christian Solidarity International?"

"Ah, they are different. They buy in much larger quantities."

Though the overwhelming majority of rebel officials are honest, it would be unsurprising if a few used their access to well-intentioned redeemers and desperately poor village leaders to make money. One scam is said to work as follows. Corrupt officials set themselves up as bankers and insist that redeemers exchange their dollars for Sudanese pounds, a nearly worthless currency. (People in the south almost always use Ugandan and Kenyan shillings or U.S. dollars.) The officials arrange by radio to have some villagers play slaves and some play slave-sellers, and when the redeemers arrive, the Sudanese pounds are used to free the slaves. When the redeemers are gone, the pounds are turned back over to the corrupt officials, who hand out a few dollars in return. Most of the dollars stay with the officials, who now also have the Sudanese pounds with which to play banker again.

Jacobson exchanged no money, but two mid-level SRRA officials insisted on accompanying him and me to Nyamlell. When we landed on the dirt runway, a local commissioner named Alev Akechak Jok met our plane. He refused to make eye contact with the SRRA officials, and was adamant about meeting privately with Jacobson and me. A guard with an AK-47 barred the SRRA officials from joining us in the compound. The commissioner offered tea and an admission: "There are no slaves here for you to buy." He was happy to elaborate on the problem of slave raids—a real menace in his part of the world—but he would not say why there was no one

UNKNOWN BIRD

Out of the dry days
through the dusty leaves
far across the valley
those few notes never
heard here before

one fluted phrase
floating over its
wandering secret
all at once wells up
somewhere else

and is gone before it
goes on fallen into
its own echo leaving
a hollow through the air
that is dry as before

where is it from
hardly anyone
seems to have noticed it
so far but who now
would have been listening

it is not native here
that may be the one
thing we are sure of
it came from somewhere
else perhaps alone

so keeps on calling for
no one who is here
hoping to be heard
by another of its own
unlikely origin

trying once more the same few
notes that began the song
of an oriole last heard
years ago in another
existence there

it goes again tell
no one it is here
foreign as we are
who are filling the days
with a sound of our own

—W. S. MERWIN

in Nyamlell to be redeemed, only repeating that there *was* no one. Hadn't the SRRA radioed his village the previous day and learned that there were forty children to be freed? He shook his head no.

As we returned to the airstrip, the SRRA officials rejoined us. One said that he had just found a trader and ten children to be redeemed. Jok suddenly became angry and pulled me aside. The officials could not hear us over the whirling propeller. "You must leave now!" he demanded. Are the children slaves? I asked. "No," he said, "they are the children of the village. We do not want you to do this thing. We are Christian people. We do not want the world to turn its face from us." Jok has since been removed from his post, probably in retaliation for his honesty.

As Jok's example suggests, honest villagers often refuse to play along. A few days before the incident in Nyamlell, Steven Wundu, of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, and Caroline Cox waited for two days in the district of Turalei for some traders who were supposed to arrive with slaves to redeem. None came. The village leaders repeatedly told Cox and the journalists she had brought along that there had been no slave raids in Turalei for more than a year, and that there was no one to redeem. Cox, with the dejected reporters, flew out on the morning of the third day. "Why are you disappointed?" Wundu asked.

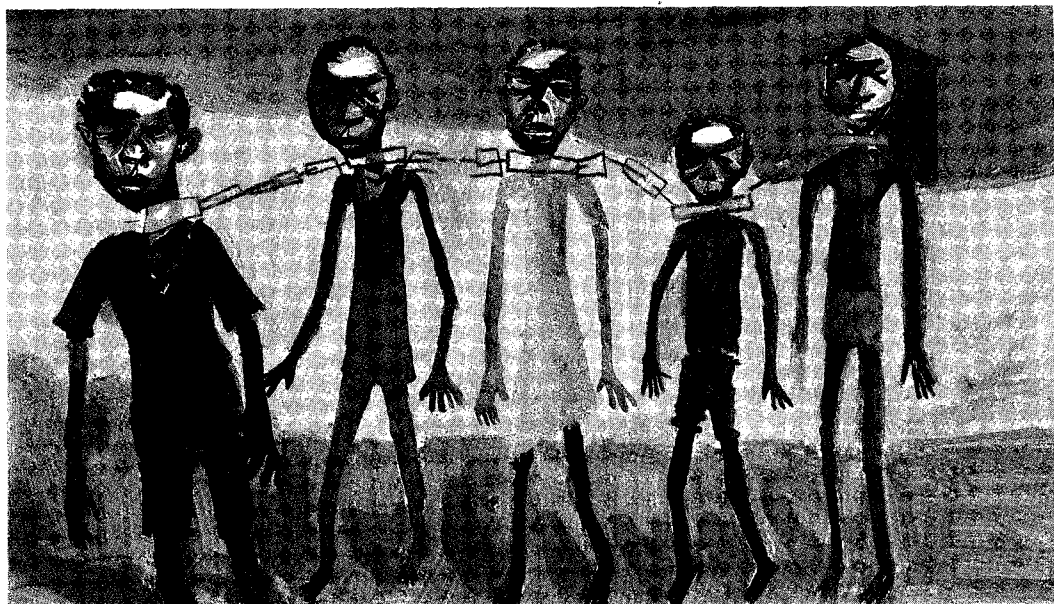
Creating a Target

LOKICHOKIO, just inside the Kenyan border with Sudan, is a settlement that has grown up around relief efforts. It is the site of a UN-controlled airstrip and the local headquarters of the UN's World Food Program. From Loki, as it is called, giant Hercules cargo planes carry tons of food and medicine to distant airstrips where the hungry wait in the shade of mud huts.

The World Food Program, which here takes the form of Operation Lifeline Sudan, has made it very easy for the Sudanese government to coordinate slave raids and food drops. Before every airlift of food UN officials notify Khartoum—whose forces have largely created the famine, in pursuance of a policy of starving the southerners into submission—exactly where and when they plan to deposit the food. No relief planes are allowed to leave the ground without Khartoum's explicit permission. Not surprisingly, in Bahr al Ghazal, Khartoum-backed raiders often arrive in time to seize the shipment and

enslave enough locals to carry it. "That's the cycle," one cynical pilot says. I encountered the aftermath of just such an episode in the village of Akoch.

To appreciate how a policy with such counterproductive consequences can be maintained, one must understand the atmosphere of utter bureaucratic indifference in Lokichokio. After the attack on Akoch, several family members brought out a gravely wounded woman named Anchor Ring, a grand-



mother of perhaps sixty, and put her under the wing of our plane. A horseman had slashed her head with a machete, leaving a wound deep enough to expose the yellow membrane surrounding her brain. Could we take her to the hospital in Loki? her family asked. The plane was half empty. The pilot radioed Loki's UN compound. The response came in the form of a question: "Does she have a valid passport and visa for travel into Kenya?" We were in rebel-held land, hundreds of miles from electric power, running water, or government offices. "No papers?" the voice said. "Tell her the hospital is full."

Denial and Deflection

IN the course of many conversations I have had with them, the supporters of slave redemption have been unwilling to address the issue of perverse incentives directly. They have countered obliquely with three arguments: slave redemption draws public attention to the tragedy in Sudan; it chips away at the slave trade one person at a time; and it ends the personal suffering of slaves and their families.

Publicity is perhaps the most frequently cited rationale for slave redemption. Certainly the on-camera manumission of a modern-day slave presents a powerful image for broadcast television. But surely the shocking reports of slave raids and the painful stories of former slaves are dramatic enough in themselves to hold the public's attention. Redemption alone

doesn't provide any special public-relations benefit—and it may contain the seeds of a public-relations disaster. Of course, it is a powerful fundraising tool. I do not believe that any of the redemption groups have other than noble motives; but the "success" of slave redemption may blind some activists to its unintended consequences.

Does redemption chip away at slavery? Undeniably, individual slaves have been given their freedom. But as the raiding parties have grown in size, the number of slaves taken has also grown. Sitting beneath color charts on food production and hand-drawn spreadsheets quantifying the deaths, injuries, and stolen livestock in southern Sudan, Erib Gaetano Felix, an *SRRA* statistician, observes matter-of-factly that slave raids have "gotten much worse every year since 1995."

Anti-slavery activists, including Michael Horowitz, of the Hudson Institute, and Charles Jacobs, of the American Anti-Slavery Group, explain the increase in slave-taking since 1995 in terms of the growing intensity of the Sudanese war. But although war is the context for the slave trade, it cannot be the main cause. The Khartoum government, which promotes the trade, has been retreating. Since 1995 the rebels, often driving captured government trucks and tanks, have seized an increasing share of Bahr al Ghazal, where most raids take place. So why is slave-taking on the rise? The raiders are essentially privateers; if the raids did not pay for themselves, the raiders would stay home. That is why they take slaves and other booty, while the main government force focuses on the destruction of strategic assets. The raiders pose a continuing threat because their bands, though sizable, are still small enough to find openings in the rebels' lines. And high prices make the risk worthwhile.

What about the humanitarian case for redemption? Activists screen emotional videos of former slaves and ask viewers to imagine that a spouse or a child had been enslaved. Wouldn't they pay for redemption? "When you personalize it like that, the answer is obvious," an abolitionist pastor told *The Oregonian*. But public policy requires a focus on the larger interest. With good reason, the U.S. government does not negotiate with terrorists or pay ransom to kidnappers. Presented with this argument, activists simply sidestep it. Michael Horowitz says, "[Redemption] may not be the answer to the problem, but it is the answer to many mothers' prayers."

A Policy That Works

DECIDING that it is better not to buy individuals their freedom needn't mean turning our backs on the people of Sudan. But the economic rewards for slave trading must be eliminated.

The United Nations and the U.S. government should require that all organizations, governmental and nongovernmental, forswear slave redemption as a condition of working in Sudan. Operation Lifeline Sudan must be reformed or suspended so that it does not indirectly aid the Khartoum govern-

ment. The UN should cease notifying Khartoum about the timing and cargo of its flights.

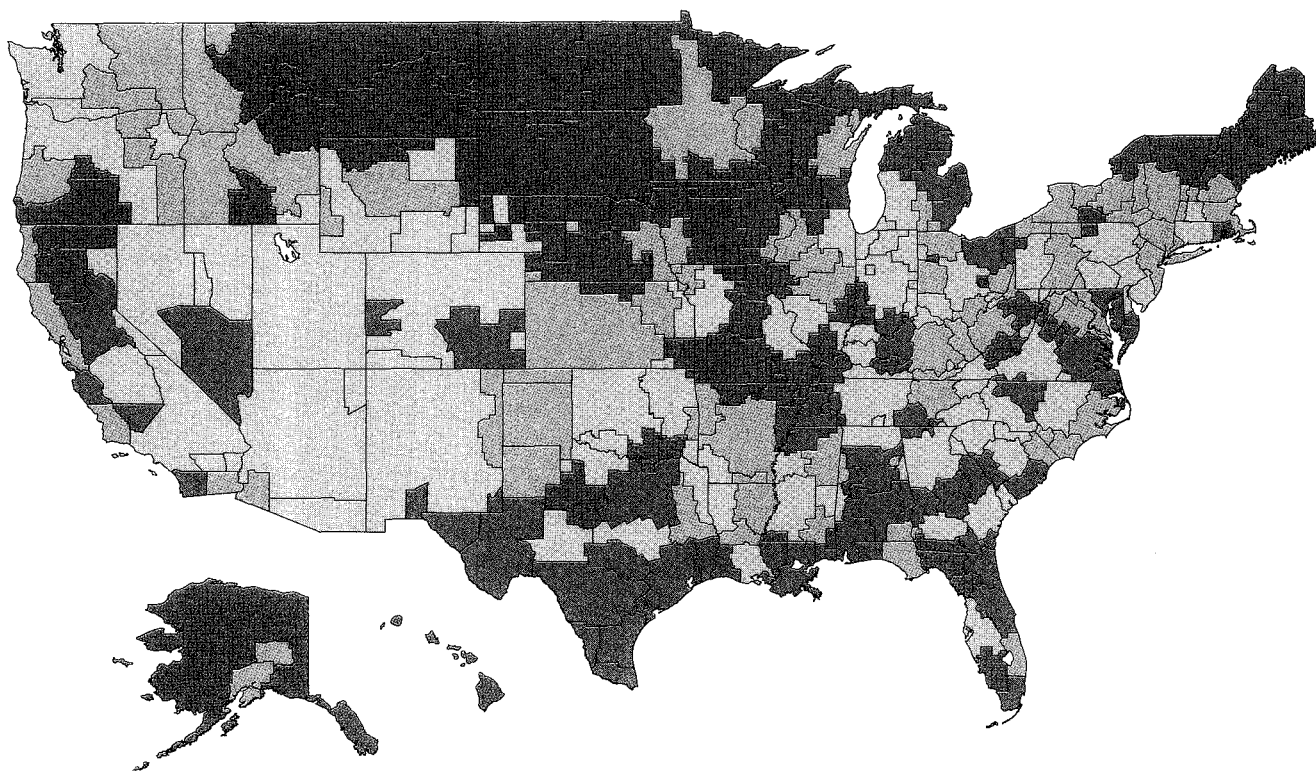
James Jacobson's organization, confronting redemption's perverse incentives, has decided to stop redeeming slaves. Jacobson has mailed letters to more than 6,000 donors, offering to return their money or to redirect it to other humanitarian efforts. Those other efforts could include some unorthodox approaches to fighting slavery in Sudan. One idea is the provision of used trucks and jeeps. Slave raiders arrive on horseback; owing to the flat, treeless landscape, they can be seen for miles. "With trucks you can head off the raiders and stop them from taking slaves, or you can chase after them and rescue people," Jacobson explains.

He also wants to put slave rescuers on salary. The rescuers could be recruited from the nomadic Rizeiqat tribe, whose members move freely in the north and even now often help to find enslaved people in exchange for the right to water their cattle on Dinka land. The Rizeiqat could be sent north with lists of people known to have been enslaved. Most hamlets in Bahr al Ghazal keep detailed lists of the missing, more than a few of which I have seen. These lists give the full name of each abducted person, his or her age, and the approximate date of capture. The lists could be collected and consolidated into a database. A rescuer who found a person on the list could help him or her to break out of captivity and return home. This would cut out the middlemen who make the slave trade possible. It would also curb hoaxes.

Policymakers, meanwhile, should focus their attention on what anti-slavery activists call the "train of death." This train, which runs between Khartoum and the city of Wau, a southern stronghold of the government, is the primary means of transport used by the slave raiders. Without it they would not be able to transport large numbers of slaves north or provide enough water for their horses. Virtually all raids occur within a two-day ride of the rail line. Severing that rail link would at a stroke curtail slavery in Sudan. But the rebels lack the tools—and outside governments lack the will.

Crafting a successful abolitionist foreign policy has never been easy, as the long British experience suggests. Beginning in the 1820s, the British sought to end slavery throughout their empire. With their powerful army and navy they shut down most of the slave markets in the African colonies within a decade. Yet pockets of slavery kept emerging for another hundred years. Throughout the nineteenth century the British government dispatched soldiers to kill or disarm slave raiders, and sent warships to crush the warlords who sheltered slave traders. Not until the first decades of this century did their campaign succeed. Even so, they had to remain vigilant lest slavery break out again. "If the colonial government were standing for election, I would vote for them," a Nairobi schoolmaster told me recently. "They gave us more than sacks of grain and kind words." One does not need to accept this wistful vote for colonialism to take the point that fighting slavery is not a task for sentimentalists. ☛

Who's Calling?



SPURRED by the recent proliferation of telemarketers, American householders have increasingly turned to Caller ID for relief from unwanted telephone calls at home. Use of the technology, which allows subscribers to identify callers without lifting the receiver, has changed over the decade that it has been in existence: early customers bought the service primarily to protect themselves from harassing phone calls, whereas today's users more commonly just want to know who's on the line—friend or stranger. "It's become a kind of electronic peephole," explains Steve Lutz, the product manager for Caller ID at Southwestern Bell.

Fifteen percent of Americans now pay for Caller ID, and, as shown on the map above, which was derived from demographic surveys in 212 media markets, the highest concentrations of subscribers are found mostly in the South. A disproportionate number of Caller ID users are members of young African-American and Hispanic households of modest incomes—a trend reflected in the above-average numbers of users clustered along the Mexican border and the Gulf Coast. (The service is relatively inexpensive, typically involving an initial outlay of less than \$30 for an identification box and a monthly fee of less than \$8.00.) In the nine southern states served by BellSouth, near-

ly half of African-American households subscribe. Among Hispanics the rate is 54 percent; researchers point out that the service allows those who are not fluent in English to determine whether the person calling is a familiar Spanish-speaker before they reach for the phone.

Migration patterns are a major factor contributing to regional differences, because consumers typically elect to add phone services such as Caller ID and Call Waiting when moving into new homes. The booming Southwest and many sectors of the rapidly growing Southeast therefore show above-average rates of Caller ID use. One anomaly is the thriving California coast. As the last state to permit phone companies to sell Caller ID, California approved the service in 1996 with the stipulation that companies first advertise to customers the option of protecting their privacy by blocking their phone numbers from being identified. The advertisements were so effective that some 40 percent of Californians are now such stealth callers, making Caller ID virtually worthless in some regions of the state. —Michael J. Weiss

Caller ID use relative to the U.S. average (15 percent)

- High
- Above average
- Below average
- Low

Sources: Claritas Inc.; Simmons Market Research Bureau

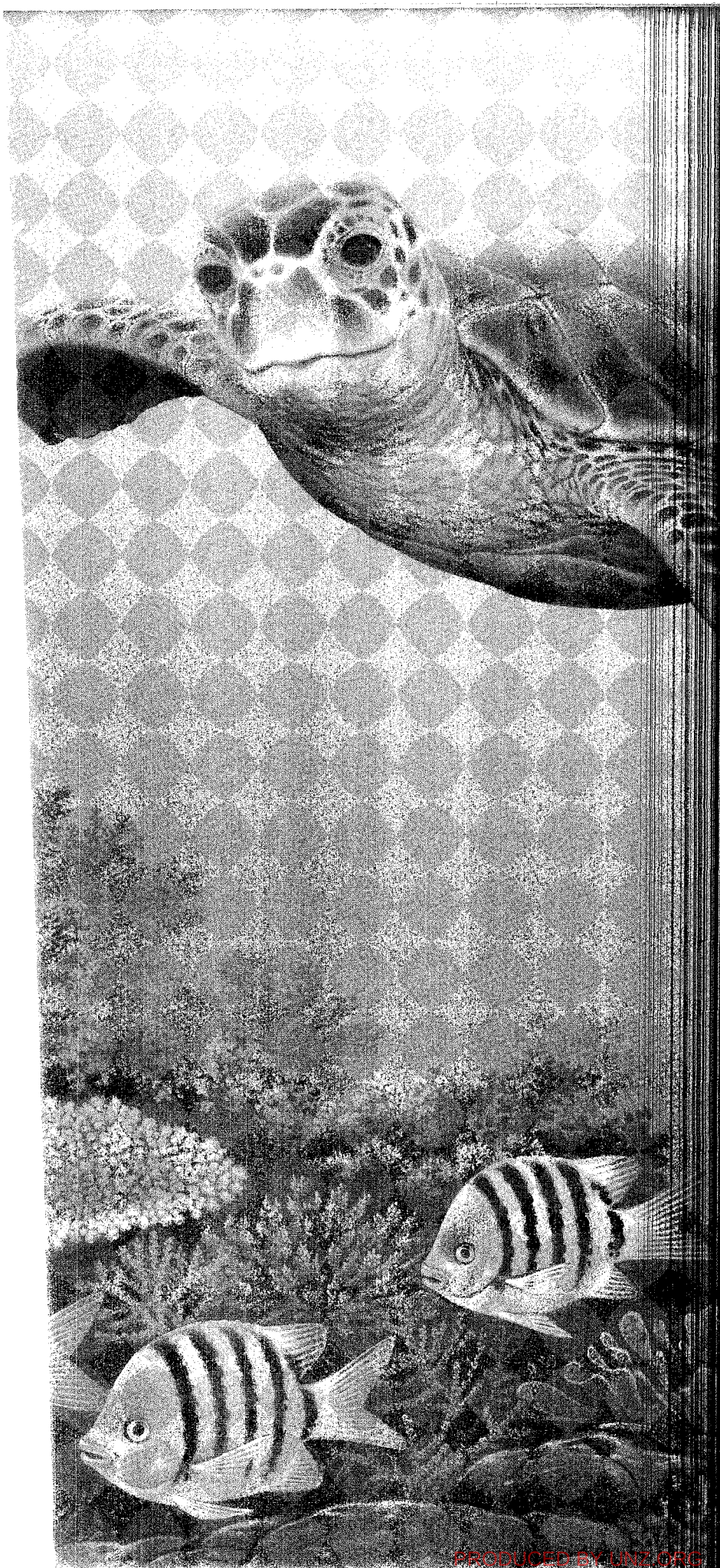
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People Do.



From Mutton Island

by BETH LORDAN

YES, of course, even if it's raining," Mary Sullivan said. "But you must tell me the train, Jimmy." The noise of the bar he was calling from, across the Atlantic, was as clear as if he were here in Galway, as clear as Lyle's heavy steps coming down the stairs. Some cloud moved on, and a rare brilliance lay across the breakfast things.

"I don't know which train," Jimmy said. "He'll just call you from Dublin, okay?"

"That's fine, then. Will you speak to your dad?"

"I'm out of money, here, Mam. Tell him hi for me. Thanks again." And he was gone.

The sunshine faded, flashed again, and disappeared for the day. Lyle would make a fuss, and Jimmy himself wasn't coming. She'd not seen him in the year since Lyle had retired and they had come here to live. She had never imagined she'd miss Jimmy so, this steady yearning like a wedge in her chest. And now, on the telephone, he'd said "Mam," let slip his baby name for her (hadn't he?), startling after years of his American "Mom," and she held it.

"How much does he want?" Lyle said.

"He didn't ask for money," she said. She turned the bacon in the pan. "He's the promise of a job, he said, with a landscaping concern."

"Landscaping." He pulled out his chair and sat down. "He called collect in the middle of the night to say he might have a job mowing lawns?"

"He didn't call collect." She lifted the bacon and eggs onto the plate and put it on the table between his fisted hands. "He sent you his love."

"Like hell he did," Lyle said. He began eating.

She poured his coffee and fixed her own plate, but she didn't want to let it hang too long between them, so when she sat down, she said, "He's a friend coming over."

He kept eating, so she said, "He thought we might show him about."

"I bet he did," Lyle said. "I just bet he did. What else did he think? That we sit around over here with nothing else to do, waiting to show his friends around?"

"It won't be so much, watching her own fork cut into an egg," she said. "Only a few days, and he'll be off to Belfast for the rest of his holiday."

"Belfast! Is he nuts?"

"He's studying something in Irish history. It'll only be a few days he's here." She spread jam on her toast. Lyle would get used to the idea; he had fussed the same way when his niece came over, the summer before, and then he'd been lovely once she was there.

"He's not staying here," Lyle declared.

"We've the room," she said, which they did. She had insisted that they buy a house with a second bedroom and bathroom, so that the boys could visit. She didn't say anything more, but just waited while he wiped his mouth and left the table, while he put on his coat and hat.

"Not that it makes any damned difference what I think, but when does this all happen?"

"Friday."

"This Friday?"

She nodded.

"That's a hell of a lot of notice—two days." He opened the door. "I suppose this guy thinks he's Irish."

Lyle had no more been to the Famine graves in Connemara than he'd been to Padraic's bar by the docks. He'd spent no grief on leaving his own sons an ocean away, and he'd not even done his Easter duty after the boys were grown

"He may think what he likes," she said, and stood. "With the name of Gilbert Monaghan, I'd think he'd some connection."

AFTER thirty years with Lyle she wasn't surprised when he came back from the shop with the newspaper and said that Gilbert Monaghan sounded Protestant to him, and snorted when she said she'd enjoy having a young one to cook for again, and grumbled about the expense they'd have when she bought a bit extra in the way of food. But she was surprised and pleased when, after lunch on Friday, he said, "You ought to make him walk out to Mutton Island," and passed her the newspaper folded to a piece called FINAL WALK PLANNED. The piece explained that the tides were rarely but predictably so extreme that one might walk on dry land to the island, almost a mile out in Galway Bay. This Sunday the walk would be possible, for the last time before construction began on the sewage-treatment plant to be built there.

Mary had a faint memory of a narrow spiral of stone steps inside the abandoned lighthouse. "I might have gone once as a girl," she said, and then, vividly, she remembered the wind as she stood with her sister Róisín on a wall, wishing mermaids from the far water. And a woman—her mother? Aunt Nora?—scolding. A magic thing, an island was.

"Bunch of protesters this time, probably," Lyle said.

Being American, he hadn't joined the long quarrel between people who wanted to save the island and people who wanted the plant, but he'd said more than once that no American city the size of Galway would be allowed to pump its raw sewage into the river and canals, where it would be carried out to sea.

And she'd replied that Galway wasn't an American city, praise be to God, and was growing by leaps and bounds, was a different city entirely from the Galway she'd grown up in, and poor as they'd been for so long, it was no wonder they'd not tended the plumbing—but she supposed he was right. When the canals got low in the summer, the smell was foul. It couldn't be healthful. Still, it was a pity about the lighthouse, and the pretty island itself.

"Maybe not," she said. "There's a magic to it, I'd say." She

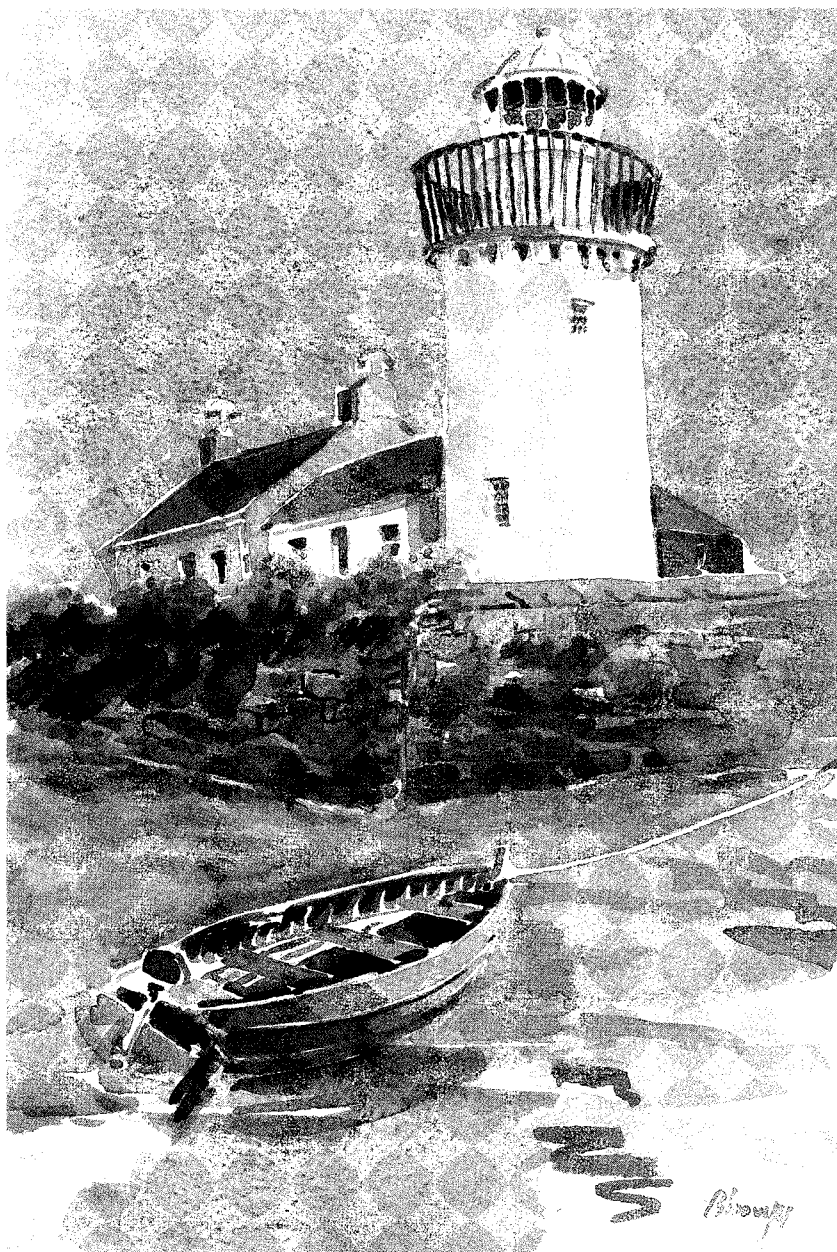
tried to imagine Gilbert Monaghan seeing the magic. "We might take him," she said.

"We?" Lyle said. "You got a mouse in your pocket?"

"You might try it," she said. "It's not so far."

He turned the page.

"Gilbert Monaghan and I, then," she said, smiling, and though he didn't smile, he answered the telephone when the boy rang, and was civil.



"Seven forty-five," he reported when he came back to the table. "Is any coffee left in there?"

Mary lifted the pot and nodded. "Could you tell what he's like at all?"

"No," he said, holding out his cup for her to pour. "He was polite. That's enough." And he took his cup back, added sugar, and picked up his part of the newspaper again.

THEY walked to the train station through a light rain that misted Mary's glasses, so when the boy stepped down from the train wearing a green high school athletic jacket, she saw her son. It was only a moment, a leap in her heart, a flash of light—Gilbert Monaghan indeed! when it was Jimmy himself come! But in that moment trembled the food she would fix, the talk they would have, the plans they would make. She could feel already his cropped hair (whatever was the boy thinking, all his pretty hair cut to stubble that way!) against her palm; she was already shaping the scolding she'd laugh him home with.

"That's the jacket," Lyle said, and raised his hand. The boy came walking through the crowd in a way that wasn't Jimmy's way, and the jacket changed and became a nylon pull-over, so Mary already knew. Still, something in her mind kept on adjusting for these things—Couldn't Lyle for once be glad to see the boy? And whatever did he have in that knapsack that made him walk so?—until the very moment that Gilbert Monaghan himself, with three earrings in one ear and the edge of a tattoo showing on the side of his neck, stood before them and introduced himself. Even then, even as she was smiling and saying "*Fáilte*—that's Irish for welcome," her hand wanted to touch his face, to be sure.

But the moment was brief. By the light in her kitchen she saw that he looked like Jimmy only in his lanky height and his blue eyes. Still, coming from the same part of the country, he had some of Jimmy's ways of talking, and she tried to warm to him. "You'll be hungry, I'd think," she said.

"A little," he said, blushing. "But I could just have some bread or something—I don't want to put you to any trouble."

Mary laughed. "No trouble at all—I like feeding boys. The bathroom's down the hall, and I've some cold supper all ready. Do you like smoked salmon?"

"Oh—uh, well, I'm vegetarian," he said, touching an earring, "but it's no big deal—"

So she was glad she'd made a nice egg mayonnaise, too, and she said, "Our Jimmy gave up meat for a time, but he'd still have the fish—it's grand food, Irish salmon. Go on and wash up," she said, "and I'll have the tea by the time you're back. You'll be dead for sleep, too, I'd think, with that long trip."

She did have the tea ready, and the plate of biscuits (she'd bought extra, so she had a nice selection, and a few sweets as well, knowing how boys were) waiting on the counter when Gilbert came back down the hall and he and Lyle sat at the table. "There, then," she said, taking her own place, and Gilbert unfolded his napkin on his lap and said, "It looks great, Mrs. Sullivan," and took some slaw and salad and a slice of bread.

"So, Gilbert," Lyle said, "you grew up in the Midwest?"

Gilbert said he had, that his parents had a large farm, and that he had two younger brothers and a married sister.

"And you're in college now," Lyle said.

"Yes, sir—I'll finish next May. I'm doing an interdisciplinary major in postcolonial studies."

"Hmp," Lyle said, but his mouth was full of salmon, so it was hard to tell what he meant. Lyle was fond of smoked salmon.

"It's a postgraduate course, I'd think?" Mary said.

Gilbert shook his head. "Undergraduate," he said, "but I'll be applying to grad school next year. Could I have some more of that bread, please?"

"You could of course," Mary said, passing the plate. "It's good bread, isn't it? I get it from An Caca Milis, on Abbeygate. They do all the whole-grain natural things there, breads and cakes and biscuits. They sell at the market, too. Will I take you to the market tomorrow? It's lovely, it is, all the stalls of crafts and fresh foods, and someone playing music."

"It sounds great," he said.

"She's got plans for you," Lyle said. "That's how she is. Tomorrow the market, Sunday the walk to Mutton Island. Last summer, when my niece came over from Chicago, she wore the girl out—of course, she was here longer than you'll be." He looked over at the plate of biscuits. "Is there more tea?" he said.

"There is," Mary said. Gilbert hadn't touched the egg mayonnaise, and she thought he must be one of those strict vegetarians, and wondered how she'd feed him. She said, "Will you have another cup, Gilbert, and some biscuits?" and then corrected herself. "Cookies, they are. It's a word I've trouble remembering to change, even with my own boys. I was talking with Kevin, our older son, just a bit ago, and I said, 'What kind of biscuit was it you liked so in primary school?' and he said, 'Biscuit?' and I said, 'Oh, cookie,' and then he said it was the fig bars. He was mad for them all the time he was growing up. But it made me a little sad so, remembering how American my boys are, never having eaten the biscuits of my childhood. They wouldn't know a Jaffa cake from a Jersey creme."

Gilbert grinned and let her pour him more tea and take away his plate. "I wouldn't either," he said. "It sounds as hard as keeping the RUC and the UVF and the UUP and the IRA all straight."

"Not so hard once you've tasted them," Mary said. "This is the Jersey creme," pointing, "and this is the Jaffa cake."

He took one of each, still smiling.

"How is Jimmy?" Mary said.

"Oh, he's great," Gilbert said.

"Is he working?" Lyle said.

Gilbert looked blank.

"He said he'd word of something," Mary said. "With landscaping?"

"Oh, yeah—yeah, he said that. It'll be great, you know, working outdoors again. It's been a heavy winter. Yeah, I think he said he'd probably be starting this week." His face tensed, stifling a yawn.

"So you're studying politics," Lyle said.

"In a way—I mean, kind of real broadly, trying to see how the political situation got so—so, well, sort of insoluble."

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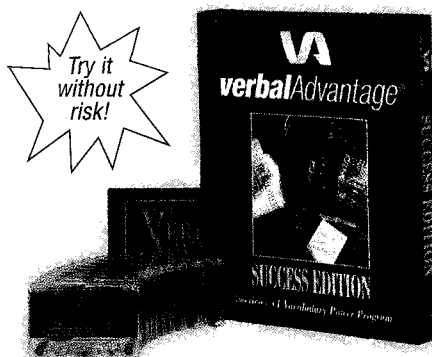
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"They let it go on too long," Lyle said. "It could have been stopped years ago."

Gilbert nodded, but Mary could see, again, his mouth holding in a yawn, so she said, "Time enough for politics tomorrow—the boy's dead for sleep. Will you take him up and show him how the shower works?"

A bit later, both of them in bed in the dark, Lyle said, "Could be worse," and Mary said, "He's grand," and then, after a time, "I wonder, does he eat cheese at all?" But by then Lyle was asleep.

SHE asked Lyle at breakfast if he would come with them to the market.

"I've seen the famous hippie market," he said, and then, maybe because of something in her face, "I suppose we could meet for lunch at Tigh Neachtain's." He wiped his mouth and nodded to Gilbert. "They always have something vegetarian, but it's a real Irish pub—crowded, cramped, smoky, local color." He chuckled.

"Grand, then," Mary said. Once she and Gilbert were away from the house, she said, "He goes on some, he does—you mustn't let it bother you."

"Oh, I don't mind," Gilbert said. "Jimmy told me—I mean, he said his dad had strong opinions."

Mary laughed, a little guilty, a little grateful to Jimmy. "He does indeed," she said. They were coming to the corner where they'd have to go straight, up the canal to see the cathedral, or turn and cross O'Brien's Bridge, straight into the market, and see the rest later. She decided to do the market first, but she asked, "Will I show you the cathedral on our way home? It was blessed by Cardinal Cushing."

"Is that the same guy who turned out to have a son in America?"

"No," Mary said. "That was Bishop Casey." She was glad that the river was high and loud, and the footpath crowded as they crossed the bridge.

The market was a success. Gilbert admired the size of the carrots and parsnips and the fact that they were still dirt-covered. He talked for a bit with a young man selling Celtic armbands (he was Canadian, they discovered, and had a tattoo around his wrist), and was suitably impressed by the *bodhrán* playing of a redheaded fellow at the top of Market Street. He did eat cheese, he said, and at Sheridan's stall Mary bought three kinds and a loaf of good bread, saying they'd make a picnic of the walk to Mutton Island the next day. As they went on, he said the smell from the Middle Eastern food stall almost made him wish he still ate meat. A girl with curly black hair turned and said, "Ah, no, there's no meat to it, love—eat all you want." Mary laughed at Gilbert's blush. "I'd mind myself—that one's from wild Donegal, probably wild herself," she teased. They might have gone around the corner and seen a bit more of the town, but the rain began again, so they made their way to Tigh Neachtain's.

Lyle was there before them, and had taken a snug and ordered her a cup of tea. For a moment, in the pleasant flurry of arrival, Mary loved everything—Lyle for the tea, Gilbert for liking the market, the pub for having a snug, Ireland for being her home. And then Gilbert said, "I'd better wash up—where's the men's room?" and Lyle burst out in a loud laugh and nearly shouted, "Outdoors!"

It was, of course. The toilets at Tigh Neachtain's were outside, in a covered alley, just the kind of thing about Ireland that Lyle loved to mock. "The walls are granite a foot thick," she said. "Would you be running pipe through that?" But later Lyle was on about Gilbert's vegetarian lasagna, which did look and smell like paste.

"They've no practice in it," she said.

"Except potatoes," Lyle said, "and they overcook that, too." Gilbert mentioned how narrow the streets were.

"The city's old," she said, "the streets just lanes from medieval times, and the buildings too solid to move."

Lyle laughed. "Cow paths, she means," he said.

The rain was bucketing down when they left, and Gilbert said, "It never does stop, does it?"

"That's how we have the million shades of green," she said, just before Lyle stepped in a bit of dog mess on the footpath, and had his say about dogs running loose.

Over the supper of spaghetti with separate meat, she asked again if Lyle would go along with them the next day to Mutton Island, and he said no, he'd no patience for pilgrimages, and Gilbert asked what Mutton Island was. So Lyle had his say about the sewage situation, and about the artist types who had fought the treatment plant, and how they also wanted to pass an ordinance banning certain colors of paint on the houses—"Infantile color combinations, they say," Lyle said. She'd have preferred other conversation, but Gilbert seemed to enjoy it, and Lyle was making an effort.

As she was clearing away the dishes, Lyle said, "How old are you?"

"Twenty-two," Gilbert said.

"Legal," Lyle said. "Would you like a whiskey?"

"Sure," Gilbert said, and Lyle took the bottle from the cupboard over the sink and poured two small ones and handed one to Gilbert, who held up the glass, smiled, said "Cheers," and drank it down.

Lyle stared.

"Nice," Gilbert said.

Lyle held out his hand for the glass and poured again. "Sip this one," he said. "It's good whiskey." He went into the front room.

Gilbert shrugged and smiled at Mary before he followed.

Still, what happened was her fault. She was putting knives and napkins into the green Sheridan's carry bag, along with the cheese and bread for the picnic, and wondering about the breakfast before the long walk, so she went in after them and said to Gilbert, "Do you eat eggs at all?"

"Just free-range eggs," he said. He said it pleasantly enough.

Lyle didn't take it so. "They have those free-range eggs up at Ward's shop," he said. "They cost more than twice what the others do."

Gilbert nodded. "Sure. On the big farms they keep the chickens locked up all the time, stimulate them with light, give them hormones, so they get greater production, so they can sell cheaper."

"So your position is that it's more important to protect chickens than to feed poor people," Lyle said. Before Gilbert could respond, he added, "Or maybe it's that the finer moral points properly belong to people with money."

She knew well that mean pleasure in his voice. He was a good man, and why he needed to act the bully like this she had never understood. A hundred times he'd done Jimmy so, and then complained that the boy avoided conversation with him. And it was no way to treat a guest, however he'd treated your drink.

But Gilbert said, "The healthiest diet anywhere in the world is the cheapest one. People don't need eggs to get protein. Grains and beans do just fine, without fat or cholesterol. So, yeah—the people who can afford the luxury of eggs ought to be responsible for the morality of egg production."

Lyle nodded and sipped his whiskey. The nod nearly fooled her. She nearly turned back to the kitchen, where the washing-up waited, but then he said, "So, you'd agree that the Famine was the moral responsibility of the Protestant landowners?"

Gilbert tilted his head. "I'd agree that the Famine might be considered the best thing that ever happened to the Irish," he said.

God in Heaven, Mary thought.

"Would you?" Lyle said.

A holy show there'd be now, and not a thing she could do to stop it: Lyle had brought it on by criticizing everything, and Gilbert hadn't a clue he'd gone past the mark.

"I would. Without the Famine, the diaspora would have been delayed who knows how long. As it was, people emigrated and made better lives than they'd ever have been able to make in Ireland." The poor boy thought it was a conversation, and went on as if it were an examination question he had learned the answer to. "In 1845 there were eight and a half million Irish, most of them living at the subsistence level; today there are forty-four million Irish-Americans, most of them middle-class or better—and nobody's counted the Irish-Canadians, or the Irish-Australians."

"I'd be interested to hear you make that argument in Padraic's pub, down by the docks," Lyle said, his voice so dangerously level that Mary could hardly keep from saying "And when have you been in Padraic's?" to head off what was coming, even though she knew that if she asked such a thing, he'd never forgive her. "There's men down there whose grandfathers didn't emigrate—who stayed and

watched their families die while the Protestant landowners' farms got bigger."

Gilbert shrugged and took a sip of his drink. "Sure—people have a big romantic investment in the idea that the Irish got screwed by the English. It's part of what keeps everything such a mess up north. Even so, it's actually another benefit to Ireland—that sentimental idea is a big part of what keeps tourism high, and brings American dollars in."

Lyle exploded. "The babies buried in Connemara would be happy to hear that," he shouted, his face gone wild red. "All those people dead of hunger and disease are resting real easy now they know they died for the Celtic Tiger!"

"Well—"

"And the men who broke their backs making the Famine roads, and then watched their children scatter to the four winds—"

Now Gilbert was loud too. "I'm not saying—"

But Lyle was louder, leaning at him, shaking his finger at him. "You are! You're saying the English saved the Irish, for Christ's sake. Saved them! By starving them to death, boy! Don't stop now—don't you want to claim that the past hundred years of poverty came out of Irish pigheadedness, too—because they didn't all turn Goddamned souper?"

Mother of God.

"I don't even know what 'souper' is!" Gilbert yelled.

"Converts," Mary heard herself say, in nearly a whisper.

"Ah," Gilbert said, the beginning of a grin on his face.

"Starving people," Lyle said. "Starving people preyed on by your good Protestants, who wouldn't feed them unless they renounced their faith. Sound familiar? Sound profitable? Sentimental?" He stood and drank the rest of his whiskey. "I think I'll take a walk."

Mary didn't move as Lyle left the room and then the house, but Gilbert did: slowly, in four unhurried sips, he finished his whiskey.

"A long day," she said finally, because something had to be said.

Gilbert put his glass carefully on the small table beside the chair and shook his head, the ghost of a grin still around his mouth. "He gets mad, doesn't he?"

"The Famine—" she said, but Gilbert stood up.

"Yeah," he said, and touched his earring. "I am pretty tired."

He was right: it wasn't the Famine at all. Lyle had no more been to the Famine graves in Connemara than he'd been to Padraic's bar by the docks. He'd spent no grief on leaving his own sons an ocean away, and he'd not even done his Easter duty after the boys were grown.

And Gilbert didn't care about the chickens, or the Protestants.

"Oh—hey, I was thinking I'd just go on up to Belfast tomorrow. This friend of mine up there, he said any time."

"You don't have to leave," she said, though of course he did.

"Oh, I know." His faint grin was there still. "It's just I

only have like ten days. I need to get the whole picture, you know?"

"The first Sunday train's not until after eight," she said.

"That's cool," he said. "I was thinking I'd hitch. It's safe here, right?"

"If you're careful," she said. "You've a map?"

SHE slept badly. Lyle came back and up to bed not long before she heard Gilbert leave quietly, when it wasn't yet light. She felt herself between the two of them, and let herself descend again through a shaft of darkness, invisible. Late in the morning, far too late for the early mass she loved, she came awake and left Lyle snoring quietly in the bed, dressed, made tea, and started out for the cathedral.

The wind came up cold, slapping her face and head as she walked, and she'd gone as far as O'Brien's Bridge before she stopped. The cathedral was ahead; it had been nothing but a huge construction site when she was a girl. She turned away from the cathedral and walked back down the streets to the promenade.

She saw people gathered farther up the bay, but she chose a place where she could make her way down to the sand without climbing over rocks. She walked, skirting the huge hanks of seaweed and the pools of seawater left by the tide. She walked, not thinking, her hands in her coat pockets, the wind at her scarf, and then there she was, stepping from the sand onto the long, tangled grass of Mutton Island. Her feet were wet despite the newspaper's promise. The sky hung gray.

The grass of Mutton Island lay like the enormous locks of some giant woman's uncombed hair. Mary felt it beneath her feet as hummocks, springy lumps, and tangled dips, and paid attention so that she wouldn't trip. She walked as the others did, following the walls and the shadows of paths worn by the feet of the long-dead lighthouse keeper and his wife and their children and animals, and she came as the others did through the ungated opening into the lighthouse garden.

Here, inside the wall, the wind dropped away, and Mary stepped into its absence, where others stood in small groups. A man pointed out past the back wall of the garden and said, speaking of the plant, "That's where they'll put it."

A younger man turned and looked back across the bay to the city and nodded. "It'll hardly show, will it?"

"So they say," the first man said, gruff and cautious. They were alike, tall and heavy, facing away from each other. "You want to go in, do you?"

"I do—don't you?"

But the older man didn't answer, and the younger—his son, of course—went on through the low doorway of the lighthouse keeper's house. After a moment the father walked deliberately back out of the garden, into the wind.

That was how they were—men. Gilbert, Lyle, Kevin, even Jimmy. Strange to her, just from being men.

She stood a bit in the garden. Once, carrots had been grown

here, and beets and parsnips. Deep in the tangle of grass the remains of a cold frame rotted, so once, an experiment with lettuces, too, had been tried. Certainly there would have been cabbages, a line of pale globes, like the memory of the freshly washed faces of children in the twilight as the lighthouse keeper's wife stepped out of the low kitchen to breathe the chilled wind. Down the slope several women were digging spent daffodils and putting the bulbs into plastic sacks to carry home, a bit of the island saved.

She thought it was sentimental, or maybe rape of the land. She sighed. She had no idea what any of the men would say about it, and she'd no wish to have a Mutton Island daffodil in her own garden. She had walked to an island, and this was what it was: an abandoned garden dug by strangers outside an abandoned home beneath an abandoned lighthouse, all of it about to give way to a sewage-treatment plant. And that was the whole truth of it, except that she had a mile of cold, wet walking between herself and her house. No mermaids, dear, she thought, no magic.

But she had come here, and never would again, so she turned and went through the low, dark rooms of the dead lighthouse keeper's house, out into a small yard, and into the lighthouse. The steps were as she faintly remembered, the whitewash flaking from worn stone in a spiral, and tight enough near the top that if a girl hadn't backed up the steps to let her come, she might have changed her mind and gone down again.

But the girl did back up, laughing, and said, "This is so cool," in an American voice. Behind her in the dark stairway a child's muffled voice called, "Up here!" Mary climbed up and stepped out into the wind on the narrow railed platform.

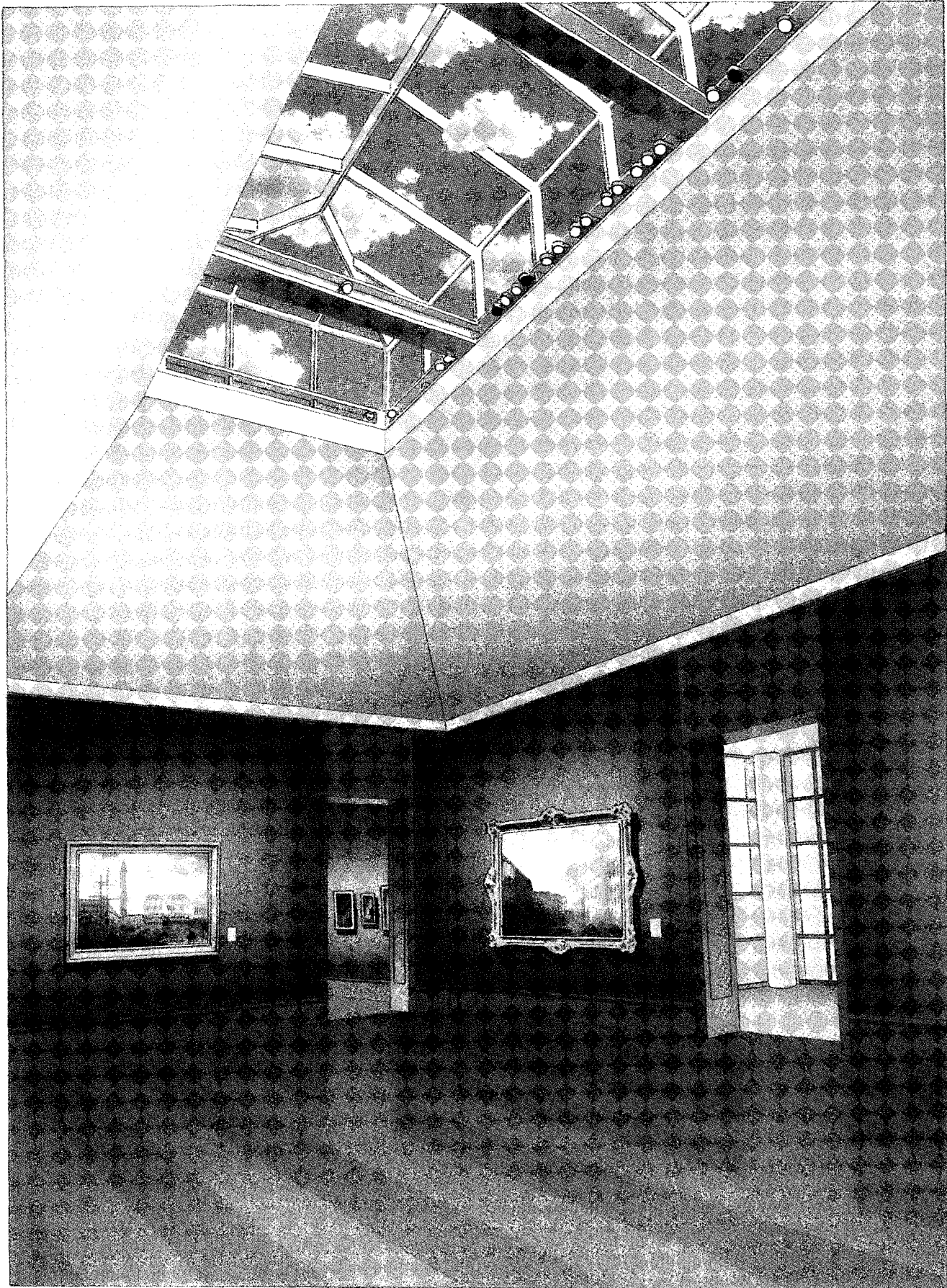
There before her, spread across the littered, mottled, puddled stretch of ocean floor revealed, walked the Irish, in boots and coats, by ones and twos and fours, with children and dogs about them, some moving slowly out toward the small green island, and some as slowly away, back toward the larger island. In the gray light they all looked sharp-edged, and divided by great distances.

Beside her an old man wheezed and said, "Lovely, ant it?" She squinted her eyes so that the figures blurred.

Hundreds would cross that sand before the extraordinary tide sighed, far out toward America, and turned itself back to refill Galway Bay. And it was only this they would come to, only this they would leave.

The old man pointed with the end of a cigarette held between his fingers. "Your man there," he said. "Got his lunch, looks like."

She cleared her eyes and looked, and among the figures just off the island stood a man in Lyle's coat and hat, a green carry bag in one hand, waving his other arm slowly back and forth in the air above his head. "He does," she said. He'd no more be Lyle than Gilbert had been Jimmy, but she raised her own arm and waved, slow and steady, before she turned, deeply tired, and made her way back down the stairs. ☘





Sonny Rollins at Sixty-eight

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ON a summer day in 1960 I lugged my tenor sax up a flight of wooden stairs in an old building in midtown Manhattan where a stubby little man named Jake Koven rented out practice rooms to musicians.

Jake was a nice guy with a democratic attitude toward his clientele. For a few bucks a guitar-toting teenager with no ear for music could strum away the afternoon in a room sandwiched between a

flutist from the New York Philharmonic and a songwriter tinkering with the finale of a Broadway show. I was playing the minor-sixth intervals of Thelonious

by George W. Goodman

Monk's "Misterioso," thinking I sounded cool, even a little intimidating, when the first four notes of the 1930s hit "Three Little Words" came through the wall like shots from a nail gun.

The saxophonist in the other room be-

gan splintering the notes into partials, and then constructed arpeggios that swirled up from the bottom of his horn, spiraling out beyond the legitimate range of the instrument and into the stratosphere of the piccolo. He restated the notes, played them *bel canto*, made them waltz, turned them upside down and inside out, and ran them up-tempo in 4/4 time, taking outlandish liberties with meter and intonation. It was pure passion, power, and precision. It was pure Sonny Rollins.

I put down my horn and considered my prospects for jazz greatness, which lay at my feet like a granite slab. Sonny Rollins was my hero, in so many ways everything I wanted to be. In January of 1959 *Esquire* had published the now famous Art Kane photograph of fifty-seven musicians in front of a Harlem brownstone, an astonishing congregation that covered the depth and breadth of American jazz as its golden age was coming to a close. Rollins was the youngest star in the picture, too young to have been so *bad*. Having begun his career in seven-league

boots, he'd cut his teeth in the company of the legends Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk before finishing high school. His improvisational genius had earned the respect of Babs Gonzales, Fats Navarro, J. J. Johnson, Art Blakey, Tadd Dameron, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Coleman "Bean" Hawkins, Dizzy Gillespie, Clifford Brown, and Max Roach even before his career had begun.

The power and the complexity of his solos—improvisation as composition, like the ordered madness of a Jackson Pollock canvas—were at the core of his appeal for me. But there was also the man himself: Mr. Cool. The shades, the Pharaonic bush on the chin, the walk, the talk, the imperviousness to everything uncool. For many black men of my generation, coming of age in the late 1950s, before the new breed of race men like Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael came to the fore, the young lions of jazz were our cultural revolutionaries—rebellious, angry, but always cool. The music we called "our thing" was steeped in ethnicity. Playing it with authority meant you were at home in your own skin. Cool was defiance with dignity in the days when white cops could beat Powell and Monk for minor offenses with impunity. Miles Davis was clubbed with a nightstick outside Birdland after one of his sets. He was photographed leaving jail the next day with a bandaged head wound and a blood-splattered jacket. He was the essence of cool, and we were in awe. The lurid stories of his and others' drug use enhanced the gritty existential mystique that actors like James Dean and Marlon Brando were projecting for white America in the movies. Brando and Ava Gardner studied Davis at Birdland the way Norman Mailer and Jean-Paul Sartre absorbed the noir atmospherics of exotic expatriates like Bud Powell and Dexter Gordon when they performed at the Blue Note and Club Saint-Germain, in Paris.

By the time of my encounter with Rollins in 1960, "our thing" was all over the city, but when Rollins was coming of age, there was 52nd Street, the cluster of clubs that thrived in the Forties, and Harlem. If "The Street" was the jewelry showcase, Harlem was the mine that supplied it.

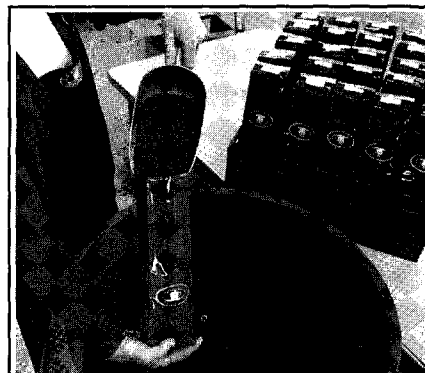
"Harlem was my conservatory," Rollins told me one day not long ago as we sat in his music studio, miles and light-years from all that, in the farm country of

Germantown, New York, near Rhinebeck, where he has lived for twenty-six years. Rollins's hair is thinning and turning snowy, like his beard, but his eyes are clear and their gaze is penetrating. With broad shoulders and stone-cut features, he is a muscular six foot two, thicker in the trunk and just as imposing as he was forty-three years ago, when a critic called him the Colossus of the saxophone. He has the bearing and gravitas of a Cushite king, even if the tunic, woolen scarf, and cap (it was a chilly afternoon) added a touch of mujahideen. I was struck by his gentility though I sensed he was not a man to be trifled with.

"Music, *our* music, was everywhere," he said in a voice of raspy sonority. "You could hear it from the best players of every style. Kenny Drew and I used to go down to the Apollo to see Tiny Bradshaw and Louis Jordan. Duke Ellington lived around the corner from me." So did the singer and actress Ethel Waters; Ellington's principal composer, Billy Strayhorn; the pianist Teddy Wilson; and the Renaissance poets Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes. So did the premier jazz tenorist of all time, Coleman Hawkins. His definitive recording of "Body and Soul" was (and still is) the cross that every jazz saxophonist has sooner or later to take up. If he was not Rollins's first hero, he probably had more to do with shaping the young Rollins than anybody else.

Rollins's mother, Valborg Rollins, a domestic who came to New York from St. Thomas, in the Virgin Islands, bought him his first saxophone when he was thirteen. (His father, Walter William, came from St. Croix, and was a career Navy sailor who helped to support his family but was rarely at home.)

In the Rollins household learning an instrument was one thing, playing jazz was another. Many middle-class blacks were fearful of what they saw as the social stigma of the music. "All West Indian parents wanted children who could entertain by playing something at teatime on Sundays," Gloria Anderson, Rollins's older sister, says, "but no one wanted them to think of becoming a jazz musician." Rollins's older brother, Val, was studying classical violin, but on his way to medical school. Once it was clear where Sonny was headed, he became, in Anderson's words, "the black sheep of the family." (Anderson wasn't overjoyed



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when, years later, her own son, Clifton, decided to follow in Uncle Sonny's rather than Uncle Val's footsteps. Clifton has played the trombone with his uncle for fourteen years.) Still, his mother paid for the twenty-five-cent lessons at the New York Academy of Music. Rollins was grateful, but says, "Twenty-five cents didn't get very much. I consider myself largely self-taught, but not well enough." A nagging sense of deficiency, Rollins says, is one of the things that drive him even now. "I've always tried to push myself to make up for it."

His first band was composed of kids from the environs of Sugar Hill—in Rollins's time the city's most prestigious black enclave, which overlooked the Polo Grounds and the central plain of Harlem. There was a wealth of talent to draw on. Andy Kirk Jr., the son of the bandleader and a promising saxophonist who would die young, was already making a name for himself. Jackie McLean, the founder of the Hartford Artists Collective, is a passionate altoist famous for an exquisitely dissonant pitch and a raw tone and gusto reminiscent of Charlie Parker's. He was one of the band's early members, and takes credit for introducing Rollins to the airy nonchalance of the tenor legend Lester Young.

Other alums include the pianists Kenny Drew and Walter Davis Jr., the drummer Art Taylor, and the bassist Percy Heath, a onetime Air Force fighter pilot who became the rhythmic mainstay of the Modern Jazz Quartet. The periodic presence of the piano wizard Bud Powell, who also lived in the neighborhood, set a standard for polish and authority. Davis and the percussionists Max Roach and Art Blakey would come up to hang out and also played with the band in local clubs—the 845 Club, Bowman's Lounge, the Celebrity Club, the Audubon, the Savoy, and Minton's Playhouse, Harlem's always-happening hot spot whose manager, the saxophonist and ex-bandleader Teddy Hill, presented a bottle of whiskey whenever Billie Holiday, Lester Young, or other notables took a table.

"They called them the Sugar Hill Gang," says Johnny "Little Dynamo" Griffin, the hard-driving Chicago-born saxophonist, who lives abroad but still tours the States. "They all had a respect for the masters, and they were—how can we say it for print?" He pauses and then whispers, "Bad motherfuckers! They

could *all* play." They were the progeny of the passing bebop era, the young vanguard of what would be called the modern-jazz movement. With a prizefighter's swagger in his sound, Rollins commanded attention. One of the most important musicians to take note was Monk, who quickly cultivated a collaboration.

Rollins says Monk was his guru. Musically they were soul mates. According to Steve Lacy, the Paris-based soprano player, Monk once said that Rollins was the best interpreter of his music. If the New York of the 1950s were to have a title track, my choice would be "Pannonica," Monk's tribute to his patron the Baroness "Nica" de Koenigswarter, on *Brilliant Corners* (1956), with the big, lush tone of Rollins's horn set off against the spare crystal tinkling of Monk's celesta.

Since the days at Jake Koven's I had wanted to ask Rollins what he learned from Monk. He answered me in a word: "Everything." What was it that Monk taught him? "Nothing." And so it was with Bud, Fats, Bird, Miles, and Dizzy. Rollins explained: "You were asked to come back or you weren't. If you were playing a gig and weren't cutting it, they might leave you alone on the bandstand."

"That's the way things went in those days," Percy Heath says, remembering the Darwinian rigors that only the fittest survived. "When the 'demon' [a guy who couldn't play] showed up, they raised the pitch a half step, and usually that was that. He'd get the message and move on."

Rollins's old friend Jackie McLean remembers musical encounters with Rollins that were sometimes brutal. "He and Miles gave me many a cruel lesson on the bandstand," he says. "In those days it was all about predators and their prey. And Sonny was the biggest predator of them all." Gil Coggins, a once-promising pianist who recorded with Rollins and Davis, used to warn other players about going up against Rollins: "If he doesn't blow you away in the first few bars, it's just the wolf talkin' to you before he eats you up."

ROLLINS has no memory of having been competitive. He remembers instead moments of insecurity and having at times felt as if he were the prey.

"Sometimes when I played with Miles and Coltrane, John would be taking a solo and Miles would sidle up to me and whisper something into my ear about

how good I was. A little later, when I was playing, I would notice Miles whispering in *Trane's* ear." The memory ignited a thundering laugh that filled the room.

What Rollins didn't laugh about was the unflattering comparisons some fans drew between him and Coltrane after Coltrane's ascendancy.

"John and I had been so close, musically and personally. What happened was that as the guys began to praise Trane, they put me down. I went through a period where I resented Trane. For a minute. I was later very ashamed of myself for that. I would have been more ashamed had I thought Trane knew it. I had to work on myself to get past the fickleness in those people and in myself. There I was, acting like an ordinary human being. I finally got around to facing these things. We were never competitors in the way prizefighters are. We had too much respect for the music for that kind of thing. To be ranked in such a way was demeaning, reducing us to a spectacle when we were both striving to reach higher levels. We inspired each other when we played together. The excitement of playing together was focused on making better music, not trumping each other. In those days we were fighting against the established tenor style, a style that was heavily white-boy. We were still the rebels in those days, the outsiders."

To me, the difference in their sounds matched the difference in their backgrounds. Rollins was a big-city hipster. Coltrane was raised in High Point, North Carolina. He was a gentle man offstage, soft-spoken when he spoke at all, as if he saved himself for the bandstand. You could hear the rural black South in his sound, echoes of a world-weary soul crying out in the night. But in other ways they were kindred spirits. Unlike their idol Charlie Parker, whose poetic brilliance burst forth full-blown, Coltrane and Rollins acquired their mastery through exhaustive practice regimens that were obsessive if not fanatical. Coltrane's boundless researches took him into Nicolas Slonimsky's *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns*. At the time of our encounter at Jake Koven's, Rollins told me about grappling with the high-register studies of Sigurd Rascher, the great classical saxophonist and the architect of Rollins's stairway into the stratosphere.

Rollins and Coltrane were unmatched

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in their worship of Parker, which led them nearly to self-destruction as they fell into some of the excesses of Parker's personal life.

"We used to get high on grass in a little park we called Goof Square," Rollins remembers. Soon they were experimenting with heroin. A former sideman and longtime friend says, "After the war the streets of Harlem were flooded with heroin. Musicians believed that the government gave the Mafia carte blanche to distribute narcotics in Harlem as a favor for Sicily's help against the Nazis. But the pressure to use came from the older guys we played with—though not Hawk [Coleman Hawkins] or others of his generation. They preferred booze."

"I thought at first that it helped me focus on music," Rollins says, "but then I realized it was a trick bag. Soon I didn't even own a saxophone anymore. Guys I knew were crossing the street when they saw me coming. I was even stealing from my mother."

Rollins says the worst night of his life was one he spent in jail for carrying a handgun, something he was "too stupid" to refuse to do when he and some fellow addicts trekked downtown to steal or rob so that they could afford drugs. They were desperate and looked it. "The police stopped us as soon as we got off the subway. They found the gun and took me off to jail. Going through withdrawal I wiggled out and they threw me into a straitjacket."

It was not his only trip to jail, and he was rarely without the company of fellow musicians. During one stint on Rikers Island he was commissioned by officials of the Protestant chapel to write music, and produced "Oleo," "Airegin," and "Doxo," jazz standards that wouldn't have been commissioned on the outside in those days.

The bottom for Rollins was 1955. He was "carrying the stick"—homeless—and living in the Chicago subway system. Somehow he managed to make his way to Kentucky, where he checked into the Public Service Hospital in Lexington. Four months later he was back in Chicago, clean, working as a janitor, and practicing again. Like Coltrane, Rollins became a penitent of sorts, incorporating the artist's solitary confrontation with self and complete immersion in music as if they were both the ends and the means of a devotional calling.

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"out" recording of

duets with Coleman Hawkins and the
pianist Paul Bley, *Sonny Meets Hawk*
(1963). Unlike Hawkins, many of the old
guard who couldn't make the change
were dropping from view.

Toward the end of the decade Rollins
was exploring new spiritual territory.
Coltrane, before his death, in 1967, had
become drug-free and was exploring
Christianity and Islam. Rollins was drawn
to Eastern philosophical teachings. In
1968 he traveled to Japan to perform, and
later studied Zen Buddhism. Then, tak-
ing his horn and little else, he spent four
months in the Powaii Ashram in the
Bombay suburbs, meditating on his life's
mission and practicing hatha yoga. He
came back to greet the seventies with
floppy hats and a friendly smile, for many
of us his most startling reinvention to
date. His music was a lot more accessible
too, taking on a new pop flavor that won
him legions of young fans who had never
heard of Bud Powell, Coleman Hawkins,
Lester Young, or Thelonious Monk. His
work for the next two decades left much
of his original following behind and
failed to draw the critical acclaim of his
earlier years.

AS the nineties come to a close, how-
ever, Rollins seems to be pulling
it all together. The last two times I heard
him, last year in Boston, where he packed
Jordan Hall with mostly college kids, and
in Lenox, Massachusetts, where he drew
older and younger fans, he seemed to be
weaving together disparate threads of
his long career. In Boston he delivered a
volcanic outpouring of standards and
originals, doubling and quadrupling me-
ters during his solos, tossing up quota-
tions from other songs in other keys like
so many sparks. He gave an old-style
crooner's treatment to "Skylark," bend-
ing the notes, making little motifs, and
then exploding them in a vintage-Rollins
torrent of cadenzas.

Unlike the bigger, rounder, unam-
plified sound of years gone by, Rollins's
sound has a gruff, grainy texture, and
the bell of his horn is miked, a common
practice among musicians nowadays.
He's using a softer reed than the stiff
No. 4s that he used to prefer and that re-
quire intense pressure from the mus-
cles in the lips and the jaw.

In part the new sound may be age-
related, but it's also artistic exploration.
"There are people who want to hear the

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way I sounded on *Saxophone Colossus*," he says, referring to a 1956 album that drew widespread critical acclaim. "You don't go back over the same ground and stay creative. What I want is a sound that's more earthy, more un-saxophonely. I don't want to sound like a sax."

His appearance at the Berkshire Performing Arts Theatre at the National Music Center, in Lenox, was a powerhouse "show" (his word) with a peppering of Caribbean themes which ended with kids dancing in the aisles. The context was a crossover, accessible, international sound, but Rollins's solos at its heart were pure jazz, high-octane and straight-ahead, recalling the golden age as few are left to do.

Today Rollins is once again the most highly regarded saxophonist in jazz. *The Down Beat* critics' poll for 1997 named him jazz artist of the year and tenor saxophonist of the year. He works only when he wants to, and only when the travel arrangements and accommodations are up to snuff. He seems to be at peace as much as Sonny Rollins can be at peace.

His privacy is protected by his personal manager, the former Lucille Pearson, to whom he's been married for more than thirty years. She is a genial woman with a lovely smile that belies a flinty eye for business. "I've heard that some music-industry people call me Mrs. No," she told me as she drove us on a circuitous route to their house which I couldn't have remembered had I attempted it on my own. The bed of gravel in the horseshoe driveway was thick and fresh-laid. The teal-blue paint on their small farmhouse looked new, and so did their cars. But there was nothing that spoke of great wealth or ostentation. There is a swimming pool, but Rollins has never been in it, according to Lucille.

"I've come to appreciate my solitude," Rollins said as we talked beside a fireplace made of stones the size of bread loaves. Without a fire it radiates a chill, a reminder of the spartan regimens on which Rollins thrives. "I still love the city, though more from a distance. I'm up around six A.M. and rarely on my feet after nine P.M. They're the same hours I used to keep, except they're reversed. I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't have hobbies, because music is everything for the remaining time I have on this earth."

"When I'm right and the band is right and the music is right," Rollins said, "I feel myself getting closer to the place where the sound is less polished and more aboriginal. That's what I'm striving for. The trumpeter Roy Eldridge once told a guy he could only reach a divine state in performance four or five times a year. That sounds about right for me."

"In India I renewed my commitment to music as my path. Protest is part of this. You can't have jazz without protest. Protest may be too narrow a word to apply to men like Basie, Ellington, and Hawkins. But by carrying themselves with pride, just by acting like men, the older musicians influenced younger guys like me. So did the Pullman porters, fighting for their dignity. We looked up to those guys and, when we were old enough, went a step further. It was a generational thing. The world was changing."

Even before his male role models there was Miriam Solomon, his grandmother, who took care of him while his mother worked. An activist in Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, a back-to-Africa movement that swept Harlem in the 1920s, Grandmother Solomon took Sonny to the Abyssinian Baptist Church to hear the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell and his son the Reverend Adam Clayton Powell Jr. The younger Powell would become a U.S. congressman, but both were fiery champions of militant civil-rights campaigns long before the arrival of Martin Luther King Jr. Grandmother Solomon took Sonny to marches protesting hiring bias against black clerks in Harlem department stores. She took him to demonstrations against Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, on behalf of the Scottsboro boys, and in support of Paul Robeson, the baritone and social activist harassed and beleaguered during the anti-Communist fervor that began in the late 1930s. Years later Rollins's *Freedom Suite*, recorded in 1958, was inspired by the sit-ins in the South, just as *Global Warming* (Milestone), his most recent CD, is, in Rollins's words, "about how we're trashing the world."

"As for my spiritualism," he says, "it's more an amalgamation of my religious convictions, including my belief in reincarnation. I am trying to clean up my karma so that I can come back with the blessings of the Great Spirit." ☸

“How Can the Light Deny the Dark?”

Fervently anticipated for more than forty years, Ralph Ellison's second and last novel, like his first, Invisible Man, is all about “the American theme”—identity

by Robert G. O'Meally

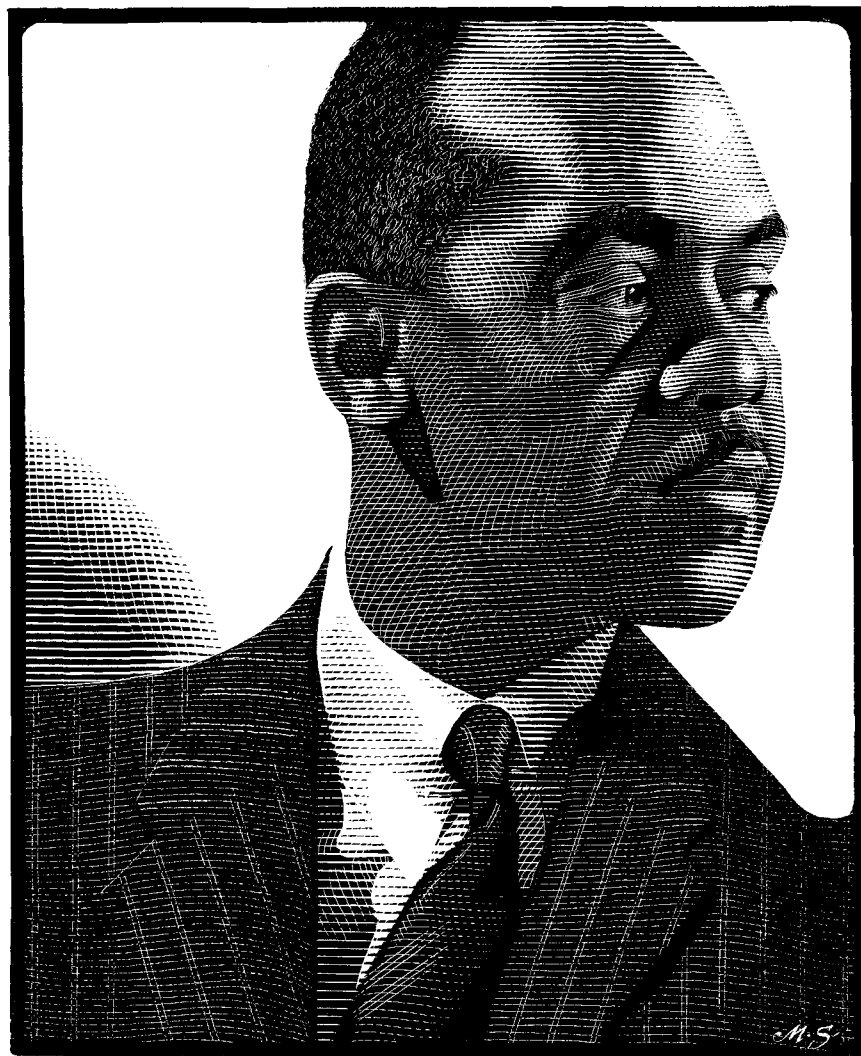
JUNETEENTH

by Ralph Ellison.
Random House, 400 pages,
\$25.00.

RALPH Ellison's second novel—evidently conceived in the early 1950s, first promised for publication in the mid-1960s—has arrived. Or at least part of it has arrived. As John Callahan, his editor and literary executor, explains in handsome front- and end-piece essays, *Juneteenth* is one section of a huge projected book left unfinished at the author's death, at the age of eighty, in 1994.

The best news is that *Juneteenth* is written with unmistakable Ellisonian zest, depth, and elegance, and that the work holds together as a complete, aesthetically satisfying, and at times thrilling whole. A novel set substantially in the black church and in or near the halls of Congress, *Juneteenth* concerns matters spiritual and political, and is braced with the rhythm of the blues.

Tales of the work's delayed progress have almost upstaged the new fiction itself. Here was a Cinderella writer, virtually unpublished except in journals, whose first novel, *Invisible Man* (1952), won the National Book Award, became a best seller, and within ten years of its publication began its career as a text routinely assigned in high school and college classrooms all over the nation and then around the world. Called the *Moby-Dick* of America's racial crisis, *Invisible Man* may be the century's most translated, celebrated American novel. (In 1985 *Invisible Man* was required reading for graduate students preparing to take a French national exam called *l'agrégation*.) It is a book with continuing word-of-mouth currency—passed



around and “thumbed to pieces,” as one critic observed, in libraries and homes. As the novel gained fame, its author, who had occasionally slept in Mount Morris Park while first trying to make it as a writer in New York, won a closetful of honorary degrees, medals, and memberships on distinguished boards and in honorary intel-

lectual societies. In 1985 he was awarded the National Medal of Arts.

All of which must have been rather burdensome to the first-novel writer, an Oklahoman by way of Alabama, thirty-eight years old when *Invisible Man* was published. It didn't take a seer to know that the man who had written this big,

ambitious book—soon issued as one of the first “double-volume” paperbacks, selling for a whopping fifty cents (not the standard quarter) at drugstores and bookshops—would set out to write another. This time, though, he would be moving in the limelight, wearing, so to speak, all these badges of honor.

Through the years friends reported that Ellison was laboring furiously on a huge tome, from which he had occasionally read bits to them. Fragments surfaced in journals; of the eleven short fictions that Ellison published after *Invisible Man*, eight were from the new book. Its first published section, “And Hickman Arrives,” appeared in 1960 in the oddly named journal *The Noble Savage*, edited by Saul Bellow, with whom Ellison often exchanged readings in those days. This long piece, forty-four tightly typeset pages in the journal, forms the backbone of the novel. The last fiction published in his lifetime, “Backwacking, A Plea to the Senator” (1977), a slender offshoot of the overdue book, was, like several others of the published pieces, edited out of the present volume.

What, aside from Ellison’s perfectionism and the problem of following *Invisible Man*’s extravagant showing, held up the second project? A devastating setback was the loss of a year’s revisions, which burned in a fire at the Ellisons’ country home, in the Berkshires, in 1967. “With regret in her voice,” Callahan reports in the introduction to *Juneteenth*, “Mrs. Ellison recalled being restrained from approaching the burning house by volunteer firemen who had arrived too late. ‘I wish I’d been able to break the window and pull out Ralph’s manuscript,’ she said. ‘I knew right where it was.’” Ellison found it hard to recoup the loss, and the fire became a mythic part of the book’s own history. In a section of *Juneteenth* written years before the fire (and recalling the treacherous set fires in Faulkner’s fiction), the main characters storm down a rough dark road in a horsedrawn buggy,

“and way off to one side I looked and saw somebody’s barn on fire. It was like a dream. . . . that big barn filling the night with silent flames. It was too far to see if anyone was there to know about it, and it was too big for anybody except us not to see it. . . . Way yonder, isolated and lighting up the sky like a solitary torch.”

The lag was also caused in part by the effort to build a book across several decades of writing time—the stretch to make the variously styled pieces hang together. First drafts were typewritten by a man in his late thirties; the last, incomplete touches were entered on computer disks by a man nearing eighty. It is evident that Ellison was a writer of self-contained episodes—a quick-composing miniaturist always thinking of the immense collage he was preparing. Transitions, he often said, had presented the gravest issues in fitting together *Invisible Man*’s mosaic of sections, two of which had appeared before the book came out. Well, transitions here presented an even harder problem, involving more sections in a much bigger book assembled over many more years. The second novel, Callahan says, alluding to an 1893 poem by Francis Thompson, “remained Ellison’s hound of heaven (and hell) pursuing him ‘down the labyrinthine ways/Of [his] own mind’ until the end of his life.”

ON a more mundane level, Ellison was dedicated to teaching and lecturing, both enterprises occasionally inspiring the novelist while, alas, tearing pages from his writing schedule. He was also an exuberant, storytelling writer of letters, as indicated by his wonderful exchanges with his friend the writer Albert Murray, which are slated for publication in the near future. He wrote to friends and family; he also surprised his critics with letters, correcting their errors and praising them, too, when praise was due. I never knew him well, but he did write me a few longish letters, one in response to an inquiry about his use of the folk character Peter Wheatstraw. In *Invisible Man* and—though I did not know it at the time—also in *Juneteenth*, Wheatstraw plays a part. On March 11, 1988, Ellison answered me with fullness and care.

As far as I know “Peter Wheatstraw” was not, and is not, a living individual, but a character born of Afro-American mythology. Unfortunately, I know nothing of his legend, nor of how it originated, but as a boy who had friends who were aspiring pool & billiards sharks I was familiar with “Peter Wheatstraw” as one half of a dual persona that was evoked in the form of a frontier brag (or boast) when players wished to challenge prospective opponents to combat upon the green cloth

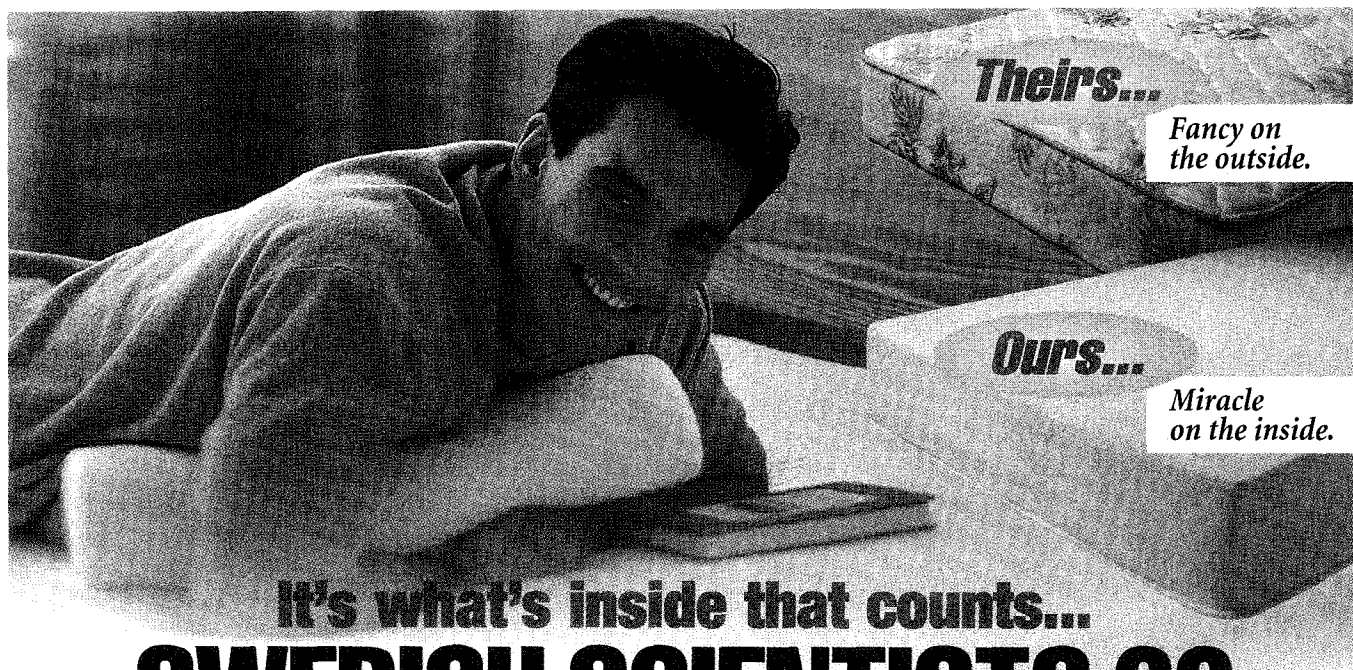
of pool tables. The name of “Wheatstraw’s” other half (by the way, he was never “Peetie” but always “Peter”) was “Lord God Stingerroy.” Thus when a challenger banged through the swinging doors of the pool parlor he’d stamp his foot and let out a belligerent roar that went:

My name is Peter Wheatstraw
I’m the Devil’s only son-in-law—
So who wants to play [or shoot]
the Devil’s Son—Lord God
Stingerroy!

That is the extent of my Wheatstraw knowledge, and the circumstance out of which I appropriated the name when I used it in my novel. In other words, I “novelized” it, and you’ll note that it appears at a point when the narrator is being challenged to draw upon his folk-based background for orientation and survival. . . . For a novelist and descendant of storytellers, such items of folk tradition are part of his inheritance and are to be used—much as the composers of music used the folk music of their individual backgrounds—in the expression of his own unique vision. They are part of the mother lode which supports his storytelling and are as free to be used by the conscious writer as they are by the oral tellers of tales.

This was tremendously helpful to me in my work on the folk sources of Ellison’s art, and aids us now in probing *Juneteenth*—where again Wheatstraw-like characters provide clues for “orientation and survival.” But such letters may also indicate where some of the novelist’s creative energies went while he was not facing the new novel’s uncompleted pages.

WISELY, Callahan extracted the most finished of the big manuscript’s three sections: “Juneteenth” (the title came from a piece of the book which was published in 1965), book two of the saga of the Reverend A. Z. Hickman and the Reverend Bliss Hickman. Like *Invisible Man*, *Juneteenth* is concerned with American leadership and identity (“the American theme,” Ellison once told an interviewer); here, too, race is the primary metaphor. A. Z. Hickman is a reformed jazz trombonist who has taken up a calling as an itinerant preacher. Now he keeps his trombone at hand not to riff for dancers at parties or to cool off Saturday-nighters ready to fight but to soothe a congrega-



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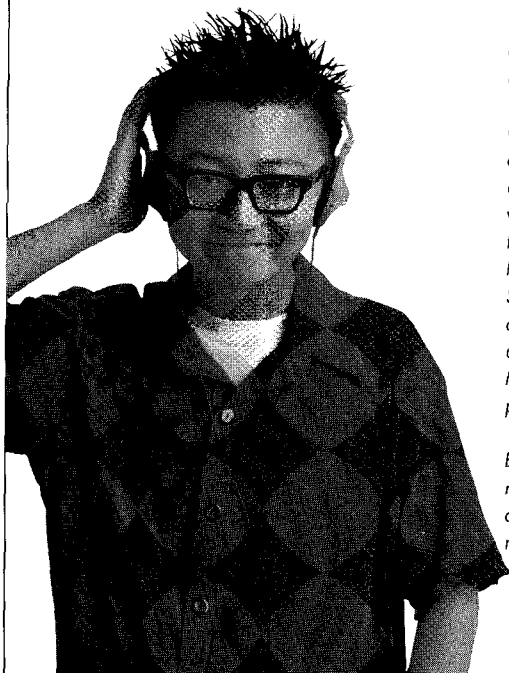
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tion shouting with the power of the Lord.

Hickman has adopted a baby boy, Bliss, who looks white but whose true racial heritage is not known. "In my work in progress," Ellison told a college group in 1966, "I don't know whether one of the main characters is black or white, and I don't feel it important in telling the story I wish to tell." Hickman names the baby Bliss, hoping that his ignorance about his paternity will be *Bliss*. The name also suggests spiritual equipoise and power, and Hickman regards Bliss as mythically gifted, in the African-American tradition that expects every child to be a candidate to lead his people to higher ground. Accordingly, Hickman raises Bliss as a boy-preacher who accompanies him in majestic, improvised dialogue sermons, balancing his trombone voice with Bliss's innocent piccolo sound. In their most dramatic sermon Bliss, on cue from Hickman, sits up from a white coffin to state Jesus Christ's anguished, dying question: "Lord, why has thou forsaken me?!"

The mystery of the novel is that this youngster of exceptional promise forsakes Hickman not just to pass for white but eventually to claim a new life as a compulsively anti-black member of the U.S. Senate from a New England state: the race-baiting Senator Adam Sunraider.

Soon after the book opens, Bliss/Sunraider has been shot down on the Senate floor. Much of *Juneteenth* is framed as a conversation between Hickman and Sunraider in the Washington, D.C., hospital room where the wounded senator is being treated. In a headnote to an excerpt from the novel which was published in 1969, Ellison explained the situation and, in the process, the novel's jazzlike call-and-recall form.

The Senator is passing through alternate periods of lucidity and delirium attending wounds resulting from a gunman's attempt on his life. Hickman, in turn, is weary from the long hours of sleeplessness and emotional strain which have accumulated while he has sought to see the Senator through his ordeal. The men have been separated for many years, and time, conflicts of value, the desire of one to remember nothing and the tendency of the other to remember too much, have rendered communication between them difficult.

Sometimes they actually converse, sometimes the dialogue is illusory and occurs in the isolation of their individ-

ual minds, but through it all it is antiphonal in form and an anguished attempt to arrive at the true shape and substance of a sundered past and its meaning.

Why has the secret son turned against his black family? Beneath the great stone of this, the novel's central question, lie others, unresolved, that touch on Ellison's view of the American national experiment. In a moment of clairvoyance Sun-raider eloquently pronounces U.S. history's "three fatal questions . . . written across our sky in accents of accusation. They are, How can the many be as one? How can the future deny the Past? And How can the light deny the dark?" Operating like the son that he was of the great Russian novelists (as well as, more obviously, of Joyce, Hemingway, and Faulkner), Ellison granted his character a poetic and analytical set of responses.

The answer to the first is: Through a balanced consciousness of unity in diversity and diversity in unity, through a willed and *conscious* balance—that is the key phrase, so easy to say yet so difficult to maintain.

For the second, the answer lies in remembering that, given the nature of our vision, of our covenant, to remember is to forget and to forget is to remember selectively, creatively! . . .

And how can the light deny the dark? Why, by seeking ever the darkness in lightness and the lightness in darkness. As we incorporate and humanize nature we filter and blend the spectrum, we exalt and we anguish, we order the world.

Here, between bursts of violently racist rhetoric, Bliss shows his down-home lineage by offering a jazz player's solution to radical problems of democracy in a land based on breaking with Old World history while creating the new. "We seek not perfection," he says, "but coordination. Not sterile stability but creative momentum. Ours is a youthful nation; the perfection we seek is futuristic and to be made manifest in creative action." The solution, in other words, is to remain resilient in the face of the blues—ready to improvise, ready to coordinate, ready to swing. God "always plans for the loooong haul," Hickman preaches in the brilliant Juneteenth-day sermon.

"He wants a well-tested people to work his will. . . . He wants us limber

as willow switches and he wants us tough as whip leather, so that when we have to bend, we can bend and snap back into place. . . . Roll with the blow like ole Jack Johnson. . . . Keep to the rhythm and you'll keep to life."

As is typical of Ellison, *Juneteenth* is organized around a series of rituals, which, as a modernist, he regarded as one of the bases of all art. Through the novel Bliss is initiated into manhood and into the mysteries of being black (and then white) in America, and therefore profoundly American. At the novel's center, too, is the horror of a lynching. Hickman's brother, falsely accused of being the one who impregnated Bliss's white mother, is killed by a white mob. Thus is he sacrificed in the brutal racial scapegoat ritual that scorches the earth of so much American history—the hopeless fire-and-blood fantasy, Ellison has written, of purifying the American bloodstream by removing the ones accused of intrinsic impurity, the unassimilable figures in black. This partly explains Bliss's betrayal: he will escape personal candidacy for the lynching bee if he simplifies his identity by getting shut of the black boy who caused all the confusion. Of course, the trouble, in a centerpiece Ellisonism, is that the enemy he would remove is himself, is Bliss. To prevent a continuous re-enactment of the Civil War—always in the background of Ellison's writing, and of which the rift between Bliss and Hickman is symbolic—reconciliation, however arduous and painful, is the only viable course.

Perhaps most profound of all the novel's underlying rituals are the ones set in the churches and revival tents of the evangelical circuit that Hickman and Bliss travel. One of the novel's most alluring sermons is the one preached on June 19, Juneteenth, the day on which blacks have traditionally remembered their emancipation from slavery with parades, dances, contests, and speeches on the history and memory of black people and the meaning of delayed freedom. In an earlier sermon on Jesus' painful death and resurrection Hickman and Bliss sound the luminescent darkness of this meditative novel's deepest places. Here they speak of the challenge given humanity to confront life's ineffable suffering and death. In keeping with this tragic sense of life, the sermon yearns for continuity and community in the American land—offers the hope, that is, of rebirth, another of Ellison's key

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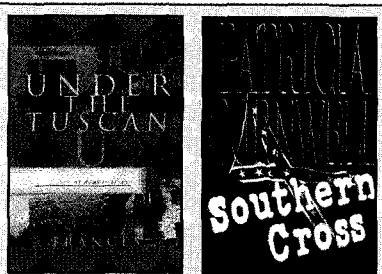
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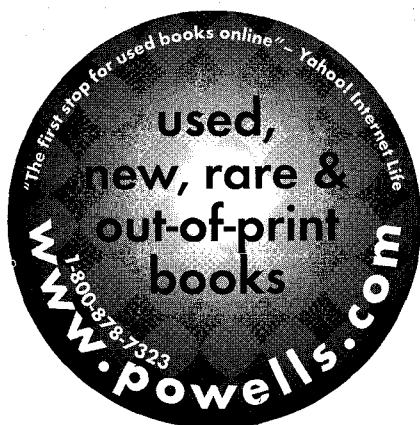
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artistic motifs. "A man doesn't live just one life, Bliss," Hickman says, "he lives more lives than a cat—only he doesn't like to face it because the bitter is there nine times nine, right along with the sweet he wants all the time. So he forgets."

Why does Bliss/Sunraider choose to forget Hickman? Maybe, as Hickman surmises, because of a mistake of fathering—spoiling when he should have disciplined the boy. Or, as Hickman says, perhaps he "prayed the wrong prayer," taking the brilliant boy for granted. Is Bliss dangerously under the spell of pop culture, movies in particular, and superficially read? Does he mistake the traveling evangelist's trade for nothing but Hollywood hucksterism, forgetting that spiritual values are where you may find them (even in the movies, even in the blues)? Hickman prays,

Down there in the craziness of the Southland, in the madhouse of down home . . . I was learning to live and to glean some sense of how Thy voice could sing through the blues and even speak through the dirty dozens if only the players were rich-spirited and resourceful enough, comical enough, vital enough and enough aware of the disciplines of life. In the zest and richness Thou were there, yes!

Intellectual novelist that he was, Ellison probed *all* his possible answers to the book's great question of why the national family remains divided against itself. Most compelling is the warning that like Bliss, white and nonwhite Americans alike routinely "pass for white" by denying their country's pluralism and interdependency, its beautiful but tragic contour. Thus they escape confronting more historical complexity than they want, as they plunge headlong toward an imagined future of personal gain and power. In the face of this national impulse to forget and deny, the novel's well-rehearsed but nonetheless improvised sermons ring with the poetry of the blues, America's great music of truth-telling and perseverance. "Trouble, trouble," shouts the singer Jimmy Rushing (Ellison's childhood friend from Oklahoma, eventually with the Count Basie band), "I've had it all my days." And yet "the blues voice," Ellison wrote elsewhere,

mocks the despair stated explicitly in the lyric, and it expresses the great human joke directed against the universe, that joke which is the secret of all folk-

lore and myth: that though we be dismembered daily we shall always rise up again.

This is the novel's urgent take-home spiritual message, its call for consciousness and for true Juneteenth: broad, bright freedom for blacks and for all of us—all of us in America, Ellison always insisted, being culturally black anyhow. "There is a *de'z* and *do'z* of slave speech," Ellison wrote in 1970, "sounding beneath our most polished Harvard accents, and if there is such a thing as a Yale accent, there is a Negro wail in it / doubtless introduced there by Old Yalie John C. Calhoun, who probably got it from his mammy."

Bravo Ellison, bravo Callahan. Next we are promised a full scholarly edition, so that the remaining overdue pages can appear somewhere outside the reading room at the Library of Congress, where Ellison's papers are housed. For now we are grateful to have *Juneteenth*: a smaller but still bountiful festival of a novel in which we meet a deeply patriotic novelist at the summit of his wisdom and eloquence. ☛

The Money Artist

by Toby Lester

BOGGS:

A Comedy of Values

by Lawrence Weschler.

University of Chicago, 160 pages,
\$22.00.

"ART is supposed to imitate life," the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled this past November, "but when the subject matter is money, if it imitates life too closely it becomes counterfeiting." The decision was the latest in a series of legal setbacks for the artist J.S.G. Boggs, who for a decade and a half has been drawing exact-size pictures of money and has generally been puzzling over the meaning of *value*. It's fitting that Boggs has been in the news lately, because disconcerting questions about money and worth have been popping up almost

everywhere. How is it that the unprofitable Amazon.com's stock could rise by nearly 1,000 percent in a year? Or that Indonesia's currency, the rupiah, could lose four fifths of its value during that same period? Or that a brand-new currency, the euro, could suddenly come into being—but solely in electronic form? Or, for that matter, that one of Andy Warhol's 5,000 soup-can prints could be worth \$10,000 if the soup pictured is tomato but only \$4,000 if it's black-bean? Strange stuff—but no stranger, Boggs would insist, than the little green pieces of paper that everybody just seems to take for granted. "It's all an act of faith," Boggs tells Lawrence Weschler, who has long been tracking Boggs's career for *The New Yorker* and who has collected much of this reporting in a delightful profile, *Boggs: A Comedy of Values*.

"Nobody knows what a dollar is, what the word means, what holds the thing up, what it stands in for. And that's also what my work is about. Look at these things, I try to say. They're beautiful. But what the hell are they? What do they do? How do they do it?"

Boggs's shtick has an undeniable appeal. In its basic form, which has been widely reported on, it goes something like this: Boggs does an extremely precise and realistic drawing of one side of a banknote on high-quality paper, taking care to incorporate playful idiosyncrasies clearly indicating that the bill is not intended to deceive. (A bill might bear the stamp of the "Federal Reserve Bank of Bohemia," for example, or might be signed by "J.S.G. Boggs, Secret of the Treasury.") He then attempts to use this bill to pay for goods or services of some sort, but only after making it plain that what he is offering as payment is not money but rather a work of art—which, he points out, must have *some* kind of value, surely, because drawing it took a lot of time and skill. (And money, for that matter, since the paper and pens and inks needed to produce the notes don't come cheap. "It costs me a goddamn fortune to draw these bills," Boggs tells Weschler.) Boggs then announces that he is arbitrarily assigning to his bill the dollar value that he has drawn on it, and leaves it up to his befuddled victim whether to accept the bill or demand "real" payment, which Boggs also offers.

If the bill is accepted, Boggs demands

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The world is much focused on the developments in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip, in which, for the most part, Israel has relinquished sovereignty and authority to the Palestinian Authority (P.A.). Ninety-eight percent of the Arabs in these territories live now under the rule of the P.A. There is some question whether or not they are better off than before. But many believe that Arabs in Israel itself are a "persecuted minority."

What are the facts?

Israel is a Democratic Country. Israel is an open, pluralistic, and egalitarian society. Different religions, cultures, and social traditions coexist. Protection of such diversity is embedded in Israel's traditions and confirmed by the government. About 20% of the population (over one million people) are non-Jews, most of them Arabs, and some Druze. Like all other Israeli citizens, they have full rights to vote and to hold elective office. Both Arabs and Druze hold seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Every Knesset, since the founding of the State in 1948, has had Arab and Druze members. All transactions in the Knesset are simultaneously translated into Arabic, and Arab members may address the Knesset in Arabic.

It is official policy of the Israeli government to foster the language, culture, and traditions of the Arab minority, in the educational system and in daily life. Arabic is an official language in Israel, together with Hebrew. Israel's Arabic press is the most vibrant and independent of any country in the region. There are more than 20 Arabic periodicals. They publish what they please, subject only to the same military censorship as Jewish publications. There are daily TV and radio programs in Arabic. Arabic is taught in Jewish secondary schools. Israeli universities are renowned centers of learning in the history and literature of the Arab Middle East.

Education and literacy of the Arab population in Israel is as high as and probably higher than in any Arab country. The literacy rate among Israeli Arabs is 95%, virtually the same as for Israeli Jews. There are close to 1,000 Arab educational institutions in Israel, with about 300,000 students—just about 25 times as many as in 1948, when the State of Israel was created.

Contrary to propaganda and to what many believe, the Arabs in Israel are full-fledged citizens, enjoy every civil right, and have the same status in law as Jewish Israelis. In summary, they enjoy the highest standards of living and liberty of any Arabs in the Middle East. It is instructive and sobering to compare the condition of the approximately one million Arabs in Israel with that of the pitiful remnants of Jewry in Arab countries. Jews have been living in Arab countries for almost 2,000 years. Under Arab dominance, they were always third-class citizens and subject to harassment and persecution. There were about 900,000 Jews in Arab countries in 1946—now there are fewer than 25,000. But there are now over one million Arabs in Israel, as against 150,000 in 1948—an almost seven-fold increase. These figures alone would seem to prove that things can't be all that bad for Arabs in Israel.

Ninety percent of Arab children attend school, probably the highest ratio of any Arab population anywhere. Israeli universities and technical institutions are freely available to the Arabs. About 5,000 Arab students attend such schools.

Israeli Arabs Enjoy Full Equality in Law and in Fact. All religious communities in Israel enjoy the full protection of the State. Israeli Arabs—Moslems, as well as many Christian denominations—are free to exercise their faiths, to observe their own weekly day of rest and holidays, and to administer their own internal affairs. Each community has its own religious councils and courts, and has full jurisdiction over religious affairs, including matters of personal status, such as marriage and divorce. The holy sites of all religions are

"Contrary to propaganda...the Arabs in Israel enjoy every civil right and have the same status under law as Jewish Israelis."

administered by their own authorities and protected by the government. In contrast to the non-Israeli Arab world, Arab women in Israel enjoy the same status as men. Israeli law grants

women equal rights, including the right to vote and to be elected to public office, prohibits polygamy, child marriage, and the barbarity of female sexual mutilation. It has thus vastly changed the status of women, to far above that of any country in the region. Israeli health standards are by far the highest in the Middle East. Israeli health institutions are freely open to all Arabs, on the same basis as they are to Jews.

There is, however, one difference between the "rights" of Arabs and Jews in Israel. Israeli and Druze men are required to do three years of military service and then serve one month every year until they are 50. Arabs are exempted from military duty and are not required to perform any compensating civilian service. Since the surrounding Arab states, with the exceptions of Egypt and recently of Jordan, are the avowed enemies of Israel and are dedicated to its destruction, this exemption is granted by the Israeli government to its Arab citizens, so as to spare them conflicts of loyalty and conscience.

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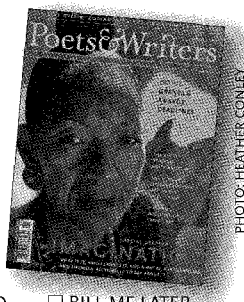


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exact change and a receipt, and then, before handing the bill over, annotates it with the details of the transaction. A few days later—after the recipient of the bill has had, Boggs says, “some time, unbothered, to think about what’s just transpired”—Boggs sells the receipt and the change (for considerably more than the face value of the bill in question) to one of the many art dealers who hunger after his work. The dealer goes off in search of the person who has the bill, in order to try to buy it (for considerably more than its face value) and then sell all the elements of the transaction (at a considerable markup) to a collector or a museum. Boggs likes to point out that somewhere along the line the work of art shifts from being the bill itself to being the series of transactions that the bill has set in motion.

This attempt to conjure up value is remarkably effective: one Boggs “transaction” not long ago resold for \$420,000, and others have been acquired for the permanent collections of the British Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Smithsonian. It also has some peculiar side effects. Boggs tells Weschler that “there’s developed this weird market in my ordinary bank checks—it’s gotten to be like with Picasso: people simply don’t cash them.” (At a numismatic convention that Boggs recently attended, he noticed a routine personal check of his for \$69 on sale for \$325.) Moreover, counterfeiters have apparently taken to forging Boggs notes, and a collector in Chicago has even started to specialize in these forgeries—which, Weschler points out, has made Boggs wonder whether he can get in on the action, by doing some of the forgeries himself.

THIS sort of thing may delight the art world, but it generally does not amuse governments, which, like Boggs, are in the business of assigning arbitrary worth to drawings that are intended to set in motion chains of transactions—but which have very little interest in provoking speculation about the philosophical underpinnings of this enterprise. Boggs has been tried unsuccessfully as a counterfeiter in cases before British and Australian courts, the captivating details of which Weschler describes at some length, and he has also for years now been battling the U.S. Secret Service, which in the early 1990s seized some 1,300 of his

ANSWERS TO THE JUNE PUZZLER



“Mismatches”

Nine imaginary husband-and-wife pairs were created by adding the letters of MATRIMONY. Across. 1. MAIMS (anag.) 7. TR(A + L)EE 9. SUM + O 10. B(L)ARE 11. RAN + CH + O 12. CAS(T)E 13. TUR(EEN) 14. KRAALS (anag.) 16. MAD(A + M)E 19. A + RAF(A)T 22. A(C)ID 23. TEAR (double def.) 24. EARN (homophone) 25. P(I)ET + AS 26. NOS(H)E’S Down. 1. MOB(y) + (BE)D 2. AT LAS(t) 3. SLEDGE (double def.) 4. REACT (anag.) 5. EM OT + E (rev.) 6. T(O)KENS 8. IN + CUR 15. AG(IT)ATE 16. MAHLER (anag.) 17. M + ANT + IS 18. SPRAYS (double def.) 20. FE(R)NS 21. TROPE (hidden) Mismatches. a. MAGE; ACHED b. DENS; ARIA c. SEA; MARINA d. BROKE; ROAN e. DAM; AGES f. DINE; HOME g. BERNE; ARGOT h. SCAR; DAIS i. BAR; GIG

works as contraband. (Boggs has never been tried as a counterfeiter in this country; his ongoing battle with the courts has to do with his persistent demand that the works seized be returned.)

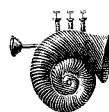
What really raised eyebrows was Boggs's "Project Pittsburgh": a plan conceived in 1992, after Boggs had become a Fellow for Art and Ethics at Carnegie Mellon, to "spend" a million dollars' worth of laser-printed Boggs bills in his standard manner—except that in this case he intended to encourage people to keep the bills in circulation. Understandably, this was too much for the Secret Service, which is growing worried about the ease with which somebody with a decent computer and printer can now produce high-quality forgeries of U.S. currency. Quietly passing around a few Boggs bills as objects of artistic contemplation is one thing; an experiment involving the creation and exchange of a million dollars' worth of them is another. (Weschler writes that in Project Pittsburgh, Boggs had in mind "an alchemical transformation likely to provoke the Internal Revenue Service every bit as much as the Secret Service.") The Secret Service effectively quashed public participation in Project Pittsburgh, Boggs says, by making ominous noises about jail sentences and such, and at that time also seized the bulk of the Boggs works it now holds as contraband.

Boggs remains undaunted, and despite his brushes with the Secret Service continues to play the role, as Weschler puts it at one point, of "money's gadfly." In one of his current projects—which could be considered an attempt to take part in the craze for ".com" IPOs—he invites visitors to his Web site (<http://jsgboggs.com>) to download and print out the image of a Boggs bill. "You may, if you wish, just sign it and frame it," Boggs writes on the site, referring to the bill, on which in certain places the word "fun" is substituted for "one." "However," he continues, "its actual value will be entirely dependent on how good a job you do in printing it." The nature of some of the ads that appear on Boggs's home page—in particular, spots for Apple Computer, an industry leader in graphic design and desktop publishing, and Canon, a prominent maker of photocopiers—is unlikely to be purely coincidental, and it's probably safe to assume that Boggs has not had his last encounter with the Secret Service.

"There was a sense, whenever one hung around Boggs," Weschler writes, "of being continually subject to imminent contamination with aesthetic perplex." That's actually a strikingly apt description of what it's like to read almost anything by Weschler. In his articles and books—the most recent of which include *Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder* (1995), *Calamities of Exile* (1998), and *A Wanderer in the Perfect City* (1998)—Weschler always seems to be, as he says of Boggs, "en-

gaged in philosophical disruptions, in provoking brief, momentary tears in the ordinarily seamless fabric of taken-for-granted mundanity." *Boggs* is no exception: the book, like the artist, challenges people to pause and consider the extent to which the economic bedrock of everyday life is in part a confusing welter of artistic abstractions. It's a work that is at once informative, entertaining, and provocative—a reading experience, one might say, of rather good value. ☘

BRIEF REVIEWS



The Road to Kosovo: A Balkan Diary

by Greg Campbell.

Westview, 240 pages, \$25.00.

Mr. Campbell, a freelance journalist, visited Bosnia in the interim between the Dayton Peace Accords and their implementation. He visited Kosovo shortly after Serbian troops began the campaign of "ethnic cleansing." He saw no formal military action on either visit, and subsequent events in Kosovo dwarf what he did see. His report is valuable nonetheless for a brisk history of the centuries-old grudges haunting the region, and for descriptions of cranky mountainous country, vile roads, and local opinions—among them, and perhaps most important for future political considerations, the complaint of a frustrated peacekeeper: "I can't point a gun at someone and order him to stop hating his neighbor."

An Equal Music

by Vikram Seth.

Broadway, 336 pages, \$25.00.

The narrator-protagonist of Mr. Seth's novel is a London-based musician and violin teacher. He has a pleasant flat and a cheerful young mistress. He plays second violin in a respected, not spectacularly revered, quartet. He does not have much money, is basically a bit bored with life

and decidedly bedeviled by regrets for a lost love, and fears that his fine but borrowed fiddle may be repossessed by its owner. When the lost love reappears, little good comes of it. The fiddle floats in limbo. The overstrung fiddler tries to maintain a stiff upper lip while privately dithering with worry. It is not a happy or a lively story but it is continuously interesting, because of amusing peripheral characters, satirical vignettes of a pompous music critic, a wily banker, and a "sticky fan," and information on instrument auctions, plus the problems and finances of a group on tour. The dialogue has a nice snap to it. The basic point emerges only gradually, but it is supported by accumulated evidence. It is a simple point: Music is the only reality that matters.

Before the Wind

by Charles Tyng.

Viking, 270 pages, \$24.95.

Captain Tyng's memoir, edited by Susan Fels, was written in his old age but covers his early career, from 1808 to 1833. He was born in 1801 to a Boston lawyer, a Harvard man who expected his sons to become well-behaved scholars. Charles was not well behaved and resisted scholarship with such fury that he was sent to sea as a "sailor boy" at the age of thirteen. By 1833, when the memoir breaks off in the midst of the author's

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cholera attack, he was a veteran captain, a shipowner, and a successful international merchant. He had begun his mercantile career very early, with an "adventure" in South American monkeys and parrots. They sold at a fine profit in Leghorn. He had sailed several times to China, circled the globe, avoided pirates in Malaysian waters, outwitted mutineers, and dealt firmly with crewmen who confirmed the old adage that only fools and drunkards go to sea. He had also persuaded his father that Harvard was not life's only and indispensable goal. He told a wonderful story with clarity (barring the professional lingo) and touches of dry humor. No admirer of Americana or sailing ships should miss Captain Tyng.

Reminiscing in Tempo

by Stuart Nicholson.

Northeastern, 536 pages, \$29.95.

Mr. Nicholson's "portrait of Duke Ellington" is a tribute to the great and original musician and composer, constructed out of what people who knew him reported publicly about Ellington. The Duke himself wrote little, and what he wrote was as deliberately artful as his standard "I love you madly" greeting to audiences. One learns from this book that Ellington was a very private man who kept his projects to himself until they were ready to go (which could be astoundingly soon) and converted his undoubted ideals into music rather than words. Mr. Nicholson's assemblage of reminiscence portrays Ellington the showman, managing brilliant but disorderly bandsmen, conducting international concert tours on barbarous schedules, and constantly writing his unique music. What more does anyone really need to know?

Too Late for the Festival: An American Salary-Woman in Japan

by Rhiannon Paine.

Academy Chicago, 200 pages, \$22.50.

Ms. Paine went to work in Tokyo at the request of an old friend and colleague in the software-manufacturing business. She knew nothing about Japan, and a quick whirl at Berlitz gave her little of the language. Her book is a belated bread-and-butter letter to the Japanese colleagues who did their courteous and

truly kind best to make the misfit comfortable. Ms. Paine admits that she feels herself a misfit anywhere, given to expecting the worst while simultaneously longing for the status of sophisticated world traveler. The contrast is sometimes piquantly amusing, sometimes mildly exasperating. Her employers supplied her with a fine apartment. One comes to wish that she had spent less time in it.

Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame

by Benita Eisler.

Knopf, 837 pages, \$35.00.

If a fiction writer imagined Byron, with all his friends, relatives, and associates, the result would be a thundering picaresque novel with strong gothic elements—and the author would probably be reproached for excessive resort to sexual misconduct, financial chicanery, psychological blackmail, and forthright improbability. Ms. Eisler's life of the real Byron is written in the spirit appropriate to such material. She reports gossip, chooses the gaudiest of several possible explanations for any episode, and confines psychological speculation to the simplest level. She uses quotation to good effect, and may entice deprived readers to enjoy the full text of the wickedly witty *Don Juan*. Solemn scholarly paraphernalia (of which there is plenty) is relegated to the servants' quarters in the back pages. This is a splendidly readable biography of a perpetually fascinating genius.

The Fencing Master

by Arturo Pérez-Reverte.

Harcourt Brace, 245 pages, \$24.00.

In 1868 all Madrid, with the exception of Don Jaime, is preoccupied with political plots and rumors of the Queen's abdication. Don Jaime is a fencing master devoted to honor and his art. He is an anachronism, which causes him serious difficulty with murders and stolen documents. The tale is offered as a mystery, but the mystery is long in developing and preceded by much lyrical reference to violet eyes and other female charms, and Don Jaime remains an ignorant bystander all the way. One has the impression that the author never quite combined his inventions with his historical setting.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

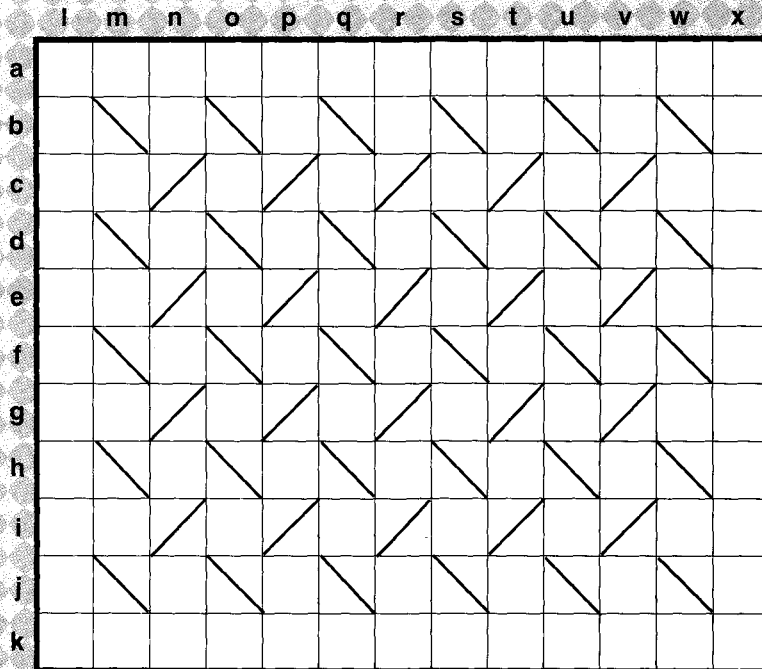


THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Family Reunion

This puzzle brings together a certain family, which will occupy all the squares in the grid that are divided by slanted lines. Each of these squares accommodates two letters—one from an Across entry (which should be entered *below* the slanted line) and one from a Down entry (which should be entered *above* it). Some divided squares receive only one letter from a clue answer (going either across or down). The missing letters, which must be deduced, complete the family and, when read column by column from left to right and from top to bottom, also identify it. Starting squares are indicated by their letter coordinates. If bars were shown, they would form a pattern that would be the same when rotated 180 degrees. Nine clue answers are capitalized; others include two colloquialisms, a combining form, and a common French word.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 96.

Across

- al.** Antiterrorist team hit quickly (4)
ap. A heap of mulch spread around yard (6)
bl. Let's go on either side of lodge with a brownish color (8)
bu. What hungry chickens do with part of a bushel (4)
cl. Punk cut Ray, a worker at an insurance company (7)
ct. Crazy Rod is back as a starter (5)
dl. Standard article for invader of England (6)
ds. Sister embraces business grad with pride in Africa? (6)
ep. Playing Handel, I took a breath (7)
fl. Rouse a woman with a male doll (6)
fs. Reviewed show about right and left spirals (6)
gn. Swing and bop with one having built-in copper bath (7)
hl. Zhivago portrayal's nearly acute condition (6)
hs. Doll with both ends of Q-tip in the ear (6)
il. Calvino edited *Lolita*, skipping the introduction (5)
ir. Left former prisoner in possession of one reference book (7)
jl. Leave cheese sandwiches with French (4)
jq. Shift V Eight at the start into second (8)
ko. Spiritual following Democratic banquet (6)
ku. Oral exercise for members of the flock (4)
oa. So sneaky, going behind dilapidated hut (6)
pa. Parrot beginning to mimic a raven's cry (5)
pg. Clouds printed across denim bib (5)
qf. Fiery immortal from California involved in UNLV upset (6)
ra. Assembly on a fifth of vodka found in tampered-with cocoa tin (11)
sa. Prime food coloring put back into livestock feed (6)
ta. A minor taken in by Los Angeles bloodsucker (5)
tg. Dole, Republican, beat pattern (5)
uf. With regard to consuming a French wine, gorge (6)
va. Bread is scattered for gull, perhaps (7)
wa. Russian city OKs AM broadcast about victory (6)
wg. Underground figure in grand gold-rush town (5)
xa. Some runners in sprints kiss (4)
xe. Rises in discussion, and agrees (7)

Down

- la.** Humble footwear worn by country's leader in disgrace (7)
lh. Old Asian land sleeps at last an hour after midnight? (4)
ma. Koresh, principally, in Texas town! (5)
mf. A tiny puss playing with big, strong dogs (6)
ne. True indignation about a bird (7)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

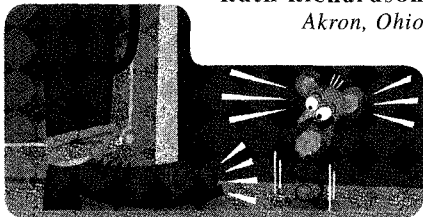
WORD COURT

by Barbara Wallraff

When I was in school, many years ago, we were taught that usage changes according to what is acceptable among people whose taste and training qualify them to make judgments. While acknowledging that language is dynamic, and necessarily adds new words and alters the meanings of others, I wonder whether such a group of judges still exists. A grating example of usage that troubles me is *snuck* for the past tense of the verb to *sneak*. The way things are going, I think one could write "When the burglar *snuck* into the room, a floorboard *cruck*, and the mouse *squuck* in alarm."

Seriously, for many years I understood the word *snuck* to be a rustic illiteracy of the sort used for dialogue in old westerns. Now I find it as part of the standard vocabulary in books and even on radio. Perhaps I should just admit that I'm getting old and stodgy—that I pucker years ago and have been going downhill ever since.

Ruth Richardson
Akron, Ohio



As I was transcribing another correspondent's letter recently, my computer's spell-checker picked up a *snuck*. I was delighted. But then I clicked the mouse button to see what correction the computer would suggest and was offered this list to choose from: *snack*, *snick*, *suck*, *shuck*, and *stuck*. There was no *sneaked* in sight. People are still better than computers—but we'd all better keep working at it if we want to stay a step ahead.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* has in fact assembled a usage panel of the kind of people you have in mind as judges of our language. And almost exactly two thirds of them, according to the current edition of the dictionary, disapprove of *snuck*. Al-

though the word is quite common in informal use, *sneaked* remains the standard past tense of *sneak*.

In the past few years I have seen many reporters use the term *déjà vu*. Not once, however, have I seen it used correctly. It is used to mean that one has been here before or done this before. (A recent example from The Denver Post reads, "Some voters may feel a sense of *déjà vu* when they spot his name on the U.S. Senate ballot this fall. . . . The 90-year-old Heckman has unsuccessfully run for a slew of elected offices since retiring from the corporate world in the 1960s.") The reporters seem unaware of the second part of the definition: that one feels this way when one has not been here before or done this before. Don't these people own dictionaries?

John T. Lacy
Denver, Colo.

They probably do, but I suspect that their dictionaries are newer than yours. You are quite right about what *déjà vu* traditionally means, and what it means to psychologists. (From a 1941 article in the journal *Mind*: "However strong the feeling that this has all happened before, it may turn out that one is not remembering, but suffering from paramnesia, a feeling of *déjà vu*.") Regardless, dictionaries now also admit the broader sense you mention, even going so far as to let *déjà vu* mean "dull familiarity; monotony." Isn't it ironic that the expression itself has entered new territory in which it already seems all too familiar?

Journalists have begun using the word arguably in describing an artist, a writer, an actor, and so forth, who has achieved outstanding success. I have seen this word used in other contexts as well. My

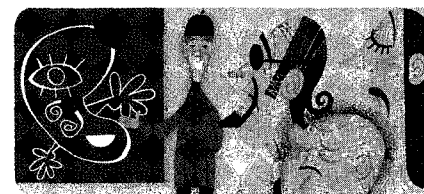
dictionary, which confirms my understanding from early school days, defines argue as "to give reasons for or against something."

The current use of the word arguably is arguable. For instance, "He is arguably one of the most talented musicians to reach the stage in years." This indicates to me that the talent of this musician could be disputed, although the article does not argue the point or compare the musician with other musicians.

If you could resolve this use of the word without too much argument, I would be grateful.

Mary N. Hanks
Falls Church, Va.

You are not the only person to have written me about *arguably*. It isn't much loved. And it is newer than many other words, having been part of our language for merely a century or so. It has a niche to occupy, however, if we'll let it. Although *arguably* concedes that others might argue against a point, it tends to emphasize that an argument can be made in something's favor. *Disputably* (which is not a common word) gives the impression of taking the contrary point of view; *debatably* shows no preference for either side; and *possibly*, *probably*, and so on fail to bring to mind argument at all. *Arguably* is a valuable word, because arguably its meaning is unique.



Have you recently had a language dispute that you would like this column to resolve? Write to Word Court in care of *The Atlantic Monthly*, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or send E-mail to MsGrammar@theatlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court.



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Mom would've
loved this award.
Even if she didn't
know what it meant.



You may have heard how my father started from scratch in the '50s to create his distinctively mellow bourbon whisky, recognized by connoisseurs around the world. My mother's contributions are a little less known.

Aside from relinquishing her kitchen for use as my Dad's test lab, she was the one who came up with the distinctive design of the Maker's Mark package. And now, nearly 40 years later, she seems to be getting some well-deserved credit.

In a recent competition, a panel of world-renowned graphic designers judged her liquor package design as one of the "Best 5" in the entire world.

Among other comments, a New York judge noted that "Every bottle is manually inverted in wax, which acts as a sea and becomes a clever design feature as the wax drips down the upright bottle. This tendril effect means each bottle is genuinely unique." Hmmm.

Of course, Mom would've never used words like that to describe her idea.

But at least she's getting some recognition, however long overdue.

I just couldn't be prouder. Because as you now know, it's quite an accomplishment to be world renowned for your tendril effect

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